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Exploring the Guilt-Proneness of Non-Traditional Students

Kristian Leigh Alton

Southern Illinois University Carbondale, kristian.alton@yahoo.com

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EXPLORING THE GUILT-PRONENESS OF NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS

By

Kristian L. Alton

B.A., Oklahoma State University, 2005

B.S., Oklahoma State University, 2007

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Science in Education

Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education
In the Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
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THESIS APPROVAL

EXPLORING THE GUILT-PRONENESS OF NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS

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Kristian L. Alton

A Thesis Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Science in Education
in the field of Educational Psychology

Approved by:

Muthoni Kimemia, Ph. D., Chair

Gail Mieling, Ph. D.

Kerrie Kardatzke, Ph. D.

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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TITLE: EXPLORING THE GUILT-PRONENESS OF NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Muthoni Kimemia

Current political forces see education as a potential solution to the economic slide the United States is experiencing. This push toward higher education and resulting employment creates a conflict for women expected by society to serve as primary caregivers of children. Research suggests that working mothers experience feelings of guilt related to the conflict between parenting and employment roles that may come from failure to personify the *intensive mothering ideology*. Student parents potentially share this guilt but few studies exist that investigate this. The results of this study suggest that student parents do experience guilt and identify relationships between guilt, gender, and relationship status. The nature of these relationships is unclear at this time, highlighting the need for further research.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my son who inspired me when he was five years old to do what I always wanted to do, to the professors in my program who helped me learn that sometimes “done” actually is “perfect”, and to all the non-traditional students I have had the honor and pleasure to meet and work with. Thank you all for your love, support, and encouragement; it would have been a much more difficult journey without you!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

At times on this journey, it seemed as if I was stumbling along alone but I was not. There were many who stepped in to offer support, encouragement, and direction even when I was not willing to ask for it. Some provided assistance with the process, others support for the research, and others simply would not let me quit. Without them, this work would not exist.

First, I would like to thank the assistants in the Statistics lab for their help with SPSS and their patience when I did not understand what they were telling me. I greatly appreciate the willingness to draw me a map when I needed one to help me "see the forest for the trees." My gratitude goes out as well to the webmasters, professors, students, and university administrators who forwarded my request for participants on to the non-traditional students they serve so that I might have data to analyze. I must also thank those students and peers who took the time to help me design the survey instrument. Your feedback was both helpful and appreciated.

In the moments of great frustration when I thought to give up, many supporters stepped forward to keep me going. Some I would have thought would have been happy to have me back instead of lost in my work, but they encouraged me to keep going, to start again, and to finish when I did not think I could. My parents kept encouraging me to not give up, reminding me I could do it if I wanted it bad enough; while my son and boyfriend offered acceptance of the demands on my time and energy even though it kept me from them. Your faith in me is humbling.

Finally, I must acknowledge my committee members for their patience and support. Always ready with wisdom, suggestions, and encouragement, they helped me move forward with this project. I could not have overcome the perfectionism holding me back without them. I appreciate the faith they placed in me.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In 2009, President Barack Obama introduced the “Graduation Initiative” as part of the political agenda his Presidency would focus on. The goal of the policy is to increase college graduation rates by 20% before 2020 (U.S. Department of Education, 2009; Dimmler, 2009), which is supported by the *College Completion Toolkit* (U.S. Department of Education, 2011) that provides state officials with tactics for increasing the number of college students (U.S. Department of Education, 2009; Kliese, 2011). Because a recognized benefit of college education is a higher earnings potential that translates into more taxes paid into state and federal coffers (American Association of Community Colleges, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2011), it is clear that education is an effective means to positively improve not only an individual’s economic situation, but also the nation’s (Bloom, 2009; Burtnett, 2011; Gerrard & Roberts, 2006; Pusser, et al., 2007; Zhan & Pandey, 2004). This initiative is not the first time that political policy has sought such an outcome. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA [PL 104-193]; United States Department of Agriculture, 1996) used welfare reform as a means to encourage greater engagement in gainful employment and offered up to one year of educational support to help meet that goal (Christopher, 2009). Though not intended to be negative, these two initiatives create a double bind for women who find themselves caught between societal expectations of them as mothers and the need to provide economic support for their children (Guendouzi, 2006; Jackson & Scharman, 2002; Medina & Magnuson, 2009; Springer, Parker, & Leviten-Reid, 2009).

Social Significance of the Study

Consider this; in order to become productive citizens in society, women are encouraged to leave home to attend college (the Graduation Initiative) and find gainful employment (welfare reform). Shifts in the foundation of the United States' economy from agriculture to technology and information require higher levels of education than ever before (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003; U.S. Department of Education, 2011; U.S. Department of Labor, 1999) and have forced more women, including mothers, into the workforce (Vander Ven, Cullen, Carrozza, & Wright, 2001). Though education is needed to get these more technological jobs (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003), welfare reform policies only allow for a year or two of higher education and the student must work to retain support services (Austin & McDermott, 2003; Bloom, 2009; Christopher, 2009; Lower-Basch, 2010), which studies show hinders degree completion (Austin & McDermott, 2003; Deil-Amen, 2005; Johnson, Rochkind, Ott, & DuPont, 2009; Naretto, 1995). Austin and McDermott's study (2003) found that even though education effectively reduces poverty, welfare reform policies often block the way.

In the *College Completion Tool Kit* (U.S. Department of Education, 2011), states are encouraged to recruit adults "with some college, no degree" (p.17) and reports that there are approximately 7 million such potential students in the United States. The Lumina Foundation reports this number at closer to 20 million (Pusser, et al., 2007). Regardless of the exact number, the student retention literature identifies such students as "stop-outs" (Horn & Carroll, 1998) and "non-traditional students" (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992; Choy, 2002; Horn & Carroll, 1996; Johnson, et al., 2009). For the past 40 years, this segment of the student population has been expanding faster than any other segment; unfortunately, it is a segment that remains poorly understood (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992; Chartrand, 1992; Donaldson & Townsend, 2007; Keith,

Byerly, Floerchinger, Pence, & Thornberg, 2006), which speaks to the extreme diversity within the population. However, current research on student parents, a subset of *non-traditional* students, reports that 25% of undergraduates are parents and 46% of them are single parents (Perna, Fester, & Walsh, 2010). Many of these students cite improving economic circumstances as a primary factor in the decision to enter or re-enter college (Huff & Thorpe, 1997; Pusser et al., 2007; Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2007).

In order to comply with welfare reform policies and the Graduation Initiative, women must leave home in order to study and work. Unfortunately, working mother studies cite the negative backlash that women experience when working outside the home in defiance of the social norm to be the primary care givers for children (Guendouzi, 2006; Jackson & Scharman, 2002; Medina & Magnuson, 2009). Despite this social norm, those mothers who choose to follow the norm and remain homebound to provide care are also criticized for failing to be productive citizens (Gauthier, Smeedeng, & Furstenberg, 2004). Additional working mother studies report that mothers often experience feelings of guilt related to this conflict (Guendouzi, 2006; Jackson & Scharman, 2002; Medina & Magnuson, 2009), and attempt to alleviate this guilt by limiting sleep and personal activities (Gauthier, et al., 2004) or leaving the workforce altogether (Peters, 2008). Student parent research echoes this experience of guilt (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992; Gerrard & Roberts, 2006; Mosee, 2009; Quimby & O'Brien, 2006); however, this research is limited and provides no insight into the ways non-traditional student parents cope with this guilt. Quimby and O'Brien (2006) suggest that psychological distress caused by guilt is a contributing factor in non-traditional student attrition, and other studies suggest that guilt related to the inability to balance the demands of work, parenting, and schooling could influence student attrition rates (Huff & Thorpe, 1997; Jacobs & King, 2002; Milheim, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

Based on the current push to increase the number of college graduates, it is a safe assumption that the government believes the way to improve the economic standing of the nation is through education (U.S. Department of Education, 2011; Dimmler, 2009; Kliese, 2011). However, as previously mentioned, working outside the home creates conflict for mothers between socially approved parenting roles and the demands of the work world (Guendouzi, 2006; Jackson & Scharman, 2002; Medina & Magnuson, 2009). It appears that a similar conflict between the demands of college study and socially accepted parenting roles also exists; however, consideration of the emotional impact of this conflict is limited in the research (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992; Kirby, Biever, Martinez, & Gomez, 2004; Mosee, 2009; Springer, et al., 2009). Though Benshoff and Lewis (1992) and Mosee (2009) mention guilt directly, there is no direct assessment of guilt, no exploration of the impact of that guilt, and no attempt to understand the role that guilt might play in student attrition. Since non-traditional students are at a greater risk for dropping out in the first year (Choy, 2002) understanding the role of guilt in that decision making process may help inform services and interventions to prevent attrition.

Purpose of the Study

Because limited literature exists regarding the emotional experiences of non-traditional students, it is difficult to determine if guilt is a common experience for this population. It is also hard to determine if non-traditional students drop out or delay educational goals in order to meet societal expectations of parenting and thus reduce their own experience of guilt. Furthermore, it is unknown what services universities currently provide or need to provide in order to lessen the impact of this guilt from a psychological and academic attainment perspective. Many studies

cited in the literature relied on demographic data collected in the 1980's and 1990's; it is unknown how the current population resembles or differs from that sample. Exploration of these issues can fill these gaps while evaluating use of the Test of Self Conscious Affect-3 (Tangney, Dearing, Wagner, & Gramzow, 2000) with this population to identify at risk students.

Research Questions

This study seeks answers to the specific questions:

- To what extent are non-traditional students in general prone to feelings of guilt?
- What influence do the demographic factors of non-traditional students exert on the experience of guilt?

These questions can provide useful information regarding how states and universities can meet the mandates set forth in the *College Completion Tool Kit* (U.S. Department of Education, 2011) while meeting needs unique to non-traditional students. Understanding the psychological challenges as well as the institutional barriers faced by this population may help inform policy makers and service providers of the shifts that must take place in order to normalize the non-traditional student experience.

Definitions Used for the Study

In any study, it is important to understand the exact definition used for the relevant terms. The terms *non-traditional student*, *student parent*, and *guilt* are important in this study and defined as follows.

Non-Traditional Student

One of the challenges to understanding and researching this population is the difficulty in defining the term *non-traditional*. There is no simple definition. It is more accurate to say that a non-traditional student is identified by a cluster of attributes that have taken researchers a decade to identify. These attributes or characteristics include:

- Being over 25 years of age (Senter & Senter, 1998)
- Being married or separated or having a gap in education (Keith, et al., 2006)
- Delaying initial enrollment (Jacobs & King, 2002)
- Being divorced or unemployed (Huff & Thorpe, 1997)
- Attending class part-time; being employed full-time; identifying as financially independent, a parent or caregiver, or a single parent, and obtaining a GED instead of a diploma (Horn & Carroll, 1996).

Non-traditional students can be further classified as minimally (one attribute), moderately (2-3 attributes), or highly (more than four attributes) non-traditional and this distinction is relevant to understanding the difficulties a particular student may face in the attempt to complete a degree (Choy, 2002). Both graduates and undergraduates have these traits; however, most research focuses on undergraduates. It is important to note that universities and researchers identify this population in a variety of ways that also contributes to the difficulty in researching this population. For example, Donaldson and Townsend's (2007) study listed *adult, mature,*

older, mixed-age, nontraditional-age, and simply *nontraditional* as some of the titles used for this population.

Adult Students

Though many early researchers used the terms *non-traditional* and *adult* interchangeably, current researchers discourage this. Compton, Cox, and Laanan (2006) point out that time has revealed a distinct difference between the “typical” non-traditional student and an adult student based on the following six characteristics:

- Adult students are enhancing training they already have
- Adult students consider themselves employees versus students
- Adult students seek a vocational certificate or GED versus a degree
- Adult students rely on or prefer distance learning courses
- Adult students often do not obtain or desire a degree
- Adult students often speak English as a second language

Though similar to other non-traditional students in relation to age, marital status, or parenting status, these six characteristics clearly separate the adult student into a distinct subgroup of this population.

Choy (2002) points out that non-traditional students do not all share the goal of degree attainment as the outcome of time spent in the classroom and highlights that these differing goals present a confound to the study of this population. Choy (2002) explains that adult students have created a life for themselves and see continuing education as a means to maintain this life. Non-

traditional students view education as the means to create a better life for themselves and are often coming to college in response to divorce (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992; Huff & Thorpe, 1997), death of a spouse/partner (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992), or due to employment lay-offs (Milheim, 2005). Some return to complete degrees put off by marriage or parenting (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992). These transitional experiences mean that non-traditional students often arrive on campus under a great deal of stress and may require additional support services during the transition (Quimby & O'Brien, 2006).

Student Parents

Student parents are another subgroup of non-traditional students. The 2003-2004 National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey (NPSAS) reveals that 46% of student parents are single parents and 63% of student parents have more than one child (Perna, et al., 2010). Historically, student parents were female (Huff & Thorpe, 1997) and this trend continues with 70% of the current student parent population also being female (Perna, et al., 2010). In 1996, student parents made up only 7% of the student body (Horn & Carroll, 1996), but by 2010 student parents came to represent 25% of the population (Perna, et al., 2010). This means that a significant proportion of student parents are single mothers.

This is important information to have as student parents are often highly non-traditional and thus at the greatest risk for drop out (Horn & Carroll, 1996; Huff & Thorpe, 1997). Only 33% of highly non-traditional students graduate (Horn & Carroll, 1996), and 58% of non-traditional students in public, four-year institutions are highly non-traditional (Choy, 2002). Additionally, researchers found that 53% of students who left school before degree completion did so because of conflicts with “family commitments” (Johnson, et al., 2009), an issue very

close to student parents (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992). Ray, Bratton, and Brandt (2000) reported that 75% of the single parents surveyed reported leaving school because of childrearing obligations. Student parents, especially single student parents, are also more likely to encounter situational barriers such as conflict with family, civic, or work commitments and institutional barriers such as class time conflicts and limited office hours that make degree completion more difficult (Keith, 2007).

Throughout the study, the term *non-traditional student* serves as an umbrella term to identify all students who have one or more of the previously listed non-traditional characteristics regardless of degree attainment goals or parenting status. This study makes no distinction between *non-traditional* and *adult* students because this distinction is irrelevant to the current study. However, the demographic data collected for the study to inform the overall picture of the population includes this information for future consideration. Likewise, this study does not exclude graduate students from consideration as early studies on the population did because more recent research includes this segment of the student body thus providing more complete information on this population (Kirby, et al., 2004; Sutor, Plikuhn, Gilligan, & Powers, 2008). For the purpose of this study, all students reporting any of the attributes listed above were eligible to participate and considered non-traditional students.

Because they are the most likely to experience guilt and they are at the highest risk for drop out, *student parents* are the focus of this study. In this study, a *student parent* is a student who reports having dependents or being a single parent as one of the characteristics identifying them as a non-traditional student. Partnered/married students are included in this category and the partnered/married status is of particular interest in relation to any mitigating or enhancing functions this role might play in relation to the experience of guilt. “Partnered” is a designation

that has been included in this study because not all couples are or can be married but their experiences are an important piece of the guilt puzzle under investigation. Also important to understanding guilt-proneness in the non-traditional student population is the guilt-proneness of non-traditional students who are neither parents nor married/partnered, and these scores were collected for comparison.

Guilt

Research with working mothers reveals a distinct relationship between guilt feelings (Guendouzi, 2006; Jackson & Scharman, 2002; Medina & Magnuson, 2009) and very specific behavioral responses (Gauthier, et al., 2004; Peters, 2008). Because the focus of this study is to determine if a similar relationship exists for student parents, it is important to understand how researchers define *guilt*. This task is slightly more complicated than defining a *non-traditional student* because of the difficulties with distinguishing guilt from shame and with separating guilt from morality. It is also important to understand the different ways that *guilt* is measured.

Guilt versus shame. *Guilt*, like *shame*, is a moral, self-conscious emotion experienced when an individual has committed some failing or transgression within an interpersonal context (Lewis, 1971; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). The two emotions are often inter-related and experienced together which led early researchers to use the terms *guilt* and *shame* interchangeably (Baldwin, Baldwin, & Ewald, 2006; Tangney, 1990; Rizvi, 2010); however, clear distinctions exist between the two. The first distinction between the two emotions comes from Lewis' (1971) work that revealed *shame* is a global self-assessment while *guilt* is a behavioral assessment. The second distinction comes from the impact of the two emotions on mental well-being. Although both emotions can have a negative impact on psychological well-

being (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994; Lewis, 1971; Tangney & Dearing, 2002), *shame* is consistently present in various psychopathologies (Baldwin, et al., 2006; Bradshaw, 1988; Bradshaw, 2005; Lewis 1971; Tangney, 1996; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Researchers have come to understand that guilt feelings focus on behavioral actions or failures to act as judged by intra and interpersonal expectations (Baumeister, et al., 1994; Lewis, 1971; Tangney & Dearing, 2002); whereas shame feelings, focus on the perception that the individual's transgressions are exposed and the individual judges self as "bad" or "unworthy" (Bradshaw, 1988; Bradshaw, 2005; Lewis, 1971; Tangney, 1996). Simply put, *guilt* is an emotional assessment of behavior and *shame* is an emotional assessment of the self (Baumeister, et al., 1994; Bradshaw, 1988; Bradshaw, 2005; Tangney, 1996; Tangney & Dearing, 2002).

Guilt and morality. Tangney and Dearing (2002) point out the importance of distinguishing between *guilt* and *morality*. The authors explain that like *shame*, *morality* mixes with *guilt*. Specifically, feelings of *guilt* and *shame* result from violation of a moral code that prescribes the actions necessary to correct the violation. *Morality* is adherence and belief in a code of appropriate behavior that is based on personal values and societal norms (Cohen, Wolf, Panter, & Insko, 2011; Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Woien, Ernst, Patock-Peckham, & Nagoshi, 2003). *Shame* tells an individual to look inside self because it is the self that is bad; *guilt* tells the individual to look at specific behaviors because it is the behavior that is bad (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). *Morality* is the measuring stick that defines what is *bad* and why (Cohen, et al., 2011; Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Woien, et al., 2003). Many assessment instruments fail to separate *guilt* and *morality* thus confounding the study of emotional style with the study of interpersonal values (Tangney & Dearing, 2002).

State versus trait. A final issue for clarification is the difference between measuring *state* (this moment) and *trait* (disposition) emotions (Otterbacher & Munz, 1973; Tangney and Dearing, 2002). Tangney and Dearing (2002) report two challenges with measuring state guilt and shame. First, researchers have not identified a specific facial expression that represents either emotion, and secondly, even researchers disagree about how to define the terms. Some researchers use trait guilt and shame measures because traits are stable over time and have a predictive capacity (Otterbacher & Munz, 1973; Rizvi, 2010; Tangney, 1996; Tangney & Dearing, 2002); while others design instruments that measure both state and trait guilt and shame to obtain a more holistic view of the emotional experience (Kugler & Jones, 1992; Otterbacher & Munz, 1973; Rizvi, 2010). Trait measures report proneness for responding from guilt or shame but recognize that reactions are situationally dependent (Tangney, 1996; Tangney & Dearing 2002). Trait measures predict that an individual who is prone to responding to certain situations with guilt or shame will feel guilt or shame in that moment and will respond in certain ways such as engaging in reparative behaviors or negatively evaluating the self (Cohen, et al., 2011; Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Woien, et al., 2003).

The definition of *guilt* in this study is the emotion experienced when an individual believes their own behavior led to a failing or transgression that might harm friends or loved one (Lewis, 1971; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). This guilt will result from violation of personal and societal morals regarding parenting and interpersonal relationships. The author uses a trait-based measure to assess for guilt-proneness among non-traditional students. As mentioned previously, highly non-traditional students are at an increased risk for degree non-completion. High guilt-proneness among this population may help inform this non-completion and provide insight into support services needed by this population.

Summary

In this chapter, the author introduced the psychological conundrum created for women by two current government policies. The author also introduced the terms *non-traditional student*, *student parent*, and *guilt* that are relevant to the study and suggested a connection between working mothers and student mothers based on the experience of guilt for violation of approved parenting roles. In the next chapter is a brief literature review of working mothers and student parents and further clarification of the links between the two groups. Additionally, the next chapter covers an exploration of the contribution of social factors to the guilt experiences of both student and working parents along with consideration of the various theoretical orientations applied to both populations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Working mothers and non-traditional students are not new phenomena. In fact, both populations have been steadily increasing; working mothers since the 1950's (Douglas & Michaels, 2004; Jackson & Scharman, 2002; Vander Ven, et al., 2001) and non-traditional students since the 1970's (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992; Senter & Senter, 1998; Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2005). Though different in many ways, these two groups share many similarities. One such similarity that is of particular interest to this study is the shared experience of guilt (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992; Guendouzi, 2006; Jackson, & Scharman, 2002; Mosee, 2009). This chapter will identify the economic trends and governmental policies that influence these two populations in similar ways, highlight the common themes in the literature that are similar between these two populations, explore the possible connection between guilt and student attrition, and suggest the use of alternative theories to help explain this attrition.

Economic Factors Influencing Non-Traditional Students and Working Mothers

Historic shifts in the foundations of the United States economy have encouraged the increases in both working mothers and non-traditional students. Historically, the United States relied on agriculture as a foundation for its economy. This foundation shifted after the Civil War to a manufacturing base, and later to a service-oriented base (U.S. Department of Labor, 1999). Current trends have the economic base shifting again by 2018 to one founded on technology and relying on the commodities of information and knowledge produced by computer related industries (U.S. Department of Labor, 1999). Such professional, scientific, and technical jobs

will require higher levels of education than ever before (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003; U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

In 1999, the Department of Labor predicted a “skills shortage” based on these trends and warned that employees would need to increase both hard and soft skills as well as obtaining higher education credentials. Based on this prediction, the current high unemployment rate represents not only a shortage of jobs, but also a shortage of qualified applicants (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011; U.S. Department of Labor, 1999). While other countries focused on educating these workers, the United States has lagged behind, and this reality is at the heart of President Obama’s Graduation Initiative and “Winning the Future” agenda (Burtnett, 2011). It is important to note that the need for increased job skills and academic credentials are often cited reasons for non-traditional students to enter college for the first time or to re-enter after a period in the workforce (Kirby et al., 2004; Pusser et al., 2007).

When the economic foundations of the country shifted, so did the makeup of the United States workforce. A key shift noted in the literature was the increasing number of women pursuing employment beyond homemaking (Vander Ven, et al., 2001). This increase in women in the workforce began in the 1900’s when the economy shifted from an agricultural base to a manufacturing base, continued to rise with the shift into a service-oriented base (Jackson & Scharman, 2002) and continues still with the increasing number of two income or dual-earner families (Haddock & Bowling, 2001). Haddock and Bowling (2001) point out that women from lower socioeconomic statuses have participated in the workforce all along, but the increasing numbers of middle and upper class women in the paid labor market challenges long held beliefs about the economy, family, parenting, and gender identity. The United States Census Bureau

(2000) reports that women comprise 54% of the current workforce and 70% of them are mothers with dependent children (Vander Ven, et al., 2001).

Not only have women experienced an increased presence in the workforce, they have also become increasingly present on college campuses nationwide (Austin & McDermott, 2003; Bean & Metzner, 1985). Jacobs and King (2002) reported that women made up over 60% of the undergraduate population in 1998, and Choy (2002) stated that female students have become the majority on college campuses. Many of these female students are parents and some are single parents. For example, Perna, Fester, and Walsh (2010) found that 71% of female students were parents, 54% were married, and 46% were single parents. It is again important to note that divorce, which often leaves women and children in or near poverty, is another often-cited reason for returning to or beginning a college degree (Huff & Thorpe, 1997). Zhan and Pandey (2004) report that single parent families, whether headed by mothers or fathers, are more likely to fall into poverty and education offers a way out of that poverty (Austin & McDermott, 2003; Gerrard & Roberts, 2006).

Governmental Policies Influencing Non-Traditional Students and Working Mothers

President Obama's Graduation Initiative is not the first time political leaders have looked to education to improve the nation's well-being. Bean and Metzner (1985) cited such initiatives as the 1944 GI Bill, the 1958 National Defense Education Act, and the 1965 Higher Education Act as previous attempts to encourage the nation to embrace higher or continuing education. One assumption behind such efforts is that higher education means better paying jobs for individuals. An individual's benefits gained from a better paying job ultimately benefits the local, state, and federal economy by generating business and increasing tax revenues (U.S.

Department of Education, 2011). Ultimately, the goal behind such laws and initiatives is to get individuals working. Such laws and initiatives clearly influence higher involvement by non-traditional students and will result in even more working mothers.

A second federal law that has increased the number of working mothers and, to some extent, non-traditional students, is the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PROWRA [PL 104-193]; United States Department of Agriculture, 1996), which is the primary law aimed at welfare reform. Under the law, participants, often poor, single mothers, who seek Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) benefits, must earn those benefits by engaging in a minimum of 30 hours per week of employment related activities (Bone, 2010; Lower-Basch, 2010). These activities may include actual paid work, job search activities, or education and training activities; however, education and training activities are limited to 12 months (in some states up to 24 months) after which the recipient must add 30 hours of additional work related activities in order to keep benefits (Bone, 2010; Bloom, 2009; Lower-Basch, 2010). Austin and McDermott (2003) report that this requirement actually makes the pursuit of higher education more difficult for poor, single mothers and Bloom (2009) states those limitations imply that education is not an acceptable activity for low-income mothers. Christopher (2009) found that welfare reform laws trap mothers between the social expectations of being productive citizens through paid work and of being good mothers to their children. Elizabeth Lower-Basch (2010), of the Center for Law and Social Policy, states that the current “work first” ideology fueling welfare reform actually traps women in low-paying shift work that offers no benefits or relief from the poverty that drove them to seek assistance in the first place. Lower-Basch (2010) goes on to suggest that extending benefits to include obtaining a higher

education (4 years or more) is a more realistic way to reduce the number of families requiring services over the long term.

Studies by Austin and McDermott (2003) and Bloom (2009) agree that the rationale behind welfare reform is the improvement of the nation's economic well-being by encouraging more people to work and pay taxes and limiting the number of people drawing on social service budgets. Both studies also state very clearly that education is a well-documented way to improve the individual's and thus the family's economic well-being. Welfare reform (PRWORA, 1996) does allow for educational activities for individuals who are by definition non-traditional students (Austin & McDermott, 2003; Bloom, 2009); however, in order to comply with time limits placed on benefits, impoverished non-traditional students can only attend junior or community colleges which limits them to either a certificate of completion or an associate's degree. Though jobs obtained with such degrees do pay more than TANF, they do not pay well enough to support a family (Zhan & Pandey, 2004) and often create more conflict for non-traditional student parents by adding additional stressors, offering rigid and inflexible employment, and placing the student parent in direct conflict with social norms (Christopher, 2009). The continuation of these limitations is surprising given that studies have found higher education effective in helping low-income mothers become self-sufficient (Bloom, 2009; Gerrard & Roberts, 2006; Huff & Thorpe, 1997).

Social Norms Influencing Non-Traditional Students and Working Mothers

Despite the shifts in the economic structure and the makeup of the workforce in the United States, certain social norms continue to create conflict between work and family roles that is particularly devastating to women (Jackson & Scharman, 2002). The term *social norms* in this

study refers to the rules established by society to govern the behavior of individuals within the society and that establish the *roles* an individual must assume in fulfillment of socially approved functions such as marriage, parenting, and employment (Bicchieri & Muldoon, 2011). These *roles* further define the normative behaviors for such positions as spouse, parent, student, or worker (Anderson & Sabatelli, 2003; Johnston & Swanson, 2007; White and Klein, 2002). An individual may experience *role strain* when they cannot fulfill role expectations (Erdwins, Buffardi, Casper, & O'Brien, 2001; White and Klein, 2002); *role conflict* when role expectations are unclear or contradictory (Anderson & Sabatelli, 2003; Erdwins, et al., 2001); and *role overload* when they believe they have too many roles to fill (Slan-Jerusalim & Chen, 2009). Social norms not only govern what the individual does but also when they do it (Rook, Catalano, & Dooley, 1989). The literature on both working mothers (Elliot, 2008; Morris & Coley, 2004; Nomaguchi & Brown, 2011) and student parents (Giancola, Grawitch, & Borchert, 2009; Jacobs & King, 2002; Medved & Heisler, 2002) frequently explores the effects of role strain, role conflict, and role overload on both populations.

Though the concepts of role strain, role conflict, and role overload are distinct, researchers often report that role strain results from an overlap of role conflict and role overload (Campbell & Moen, 1992; Erdwins, et al., 2001). The working mother (Elliott, 2008; Rothbard, 2001) and student parent (Giancola, et al., 2009; Home, 1998) literature documents these concepts clearly. Rothbard (2001), in exploring working parents, stated that role strain elicits positive or negative reactions depending on the individual's emotional reaction to the strain. Giancola, Grawitch, and Borchert (2009) reported similar reactions in student parents and added that positive and negative cognitive appraisals of the perceived strain determined coping behaviors such as use of university services or withdrawal. Some working parent studies report

that role strain can encourage employees to resign (Elliott, 2008; Jacobs & Winslow, 2004; Peters, 2008) and the student parent literature suggests this finding but makes no clear connections (Home, 1998; Jacobs & King, 2002; Ray, Bratton, & Brandt, 2000). Nomaguchi and Brown (2011) reported that when working mothers chose the role of employee over parent, they often experienced guilt, a sentiment again echoed in the student parent literature (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992; Gigliotti & Huff, 1995; Mosee, 2009).

Family Norms

The first social norm influencing both working mothers and student parents is the social norm regarding family structure. According to this norm, the ideal family structure is the “traditional” two-parent family, but the current reality is quite different (Haddock & Bowling, 2001; Medina & Magnuson, 2009). According to the United States Census Bureau (2000), single mothers head 27.4% of homes in the United States and single fathers head an additional 9.0%. This shift in family structure is not limited to the United States, Jane Waldfogel (2007) reports that 20.0% of Canadian children also live in homes headed by a single mother who must work to support the family. However, United States society views single mothers as a social problem because they often live in poverty and rely on public assistance (Christopher, 2005). In the United States, the percentage of single mother homes with children younger than 18 years old who are living in poverty is 40.6% of (United States Census Bureau, 2000). Zhan and Pandey (2004) report that poverty is not limited to single mother homes as 12.0% of families headed by a single father also live in poverty.

Many paths lead to single parent status such as unwed mothers, incarceration, military service, desertion, and death (Ray, et al., 2000). The most common path is divorce, which is also

a frequently offered reason for entering or returning to college (Huff & Thorpe, 1997; Peters, 2008). Peters (2008) adds that divorce reduces a woman's living standard by 50% often pushing the woman and her children into poverty. Huff and Thorpe (1997) reported 90% of single mothers without a high school diploma live below the poverty level where as the poverty rate is only 16% for single mothers with a college degree. This double-digit poverty rate for educated single mothers results from additional factors such as low wages, unpaid child support, and occupational discrimination (Huff & Thorpe, 1997).

Employment Norms

As previously mentioned, welfare reform policies encourage employment as the mechanism to reduce poverty even though education proves to be a more long-term solution (Austin & McDermott, 2003; Bloom, 2009; Bone, 2010; Christopher, 2009; Huff & Thorpe, 1997; Lower-Basch, 2010). This is the second social norm that influences both working mothers and student parents and is part of the foundation for the conflict that exists for women. Named the "work plan" ideology, this norm, which comes from welfare reform efforts, states that individuals should work in order to provide for their own needs and be productive citizens in society (Austin & McDermott, 2003; Bloom, 2009; Christopher, 2005; Christopher, 2009). Nomaguchi and Brown (2011), note that one shift in this ideology that has the greatest impact on women is their inclusion in the expectation to be economically successful.

Although more mothers are working than ever before, the expected decrease in poverty has not materialized for single mothers as predicted by the "work plan ideology" (Christopher, 2005; Heyns & Catsambis, 1986; Milne, Myers, Rosenthal, & Ginsburg, 1986; Vander Ven, et al., 2001; Waldfogel, 2007). Christopher (2005) explains that mothers actually lose 5% of their

wages per child. This “penalty” comes in the form of a minimum wage that is not a living wage and shortened work hours due to conflicts with the parenting role (Christopher, 2005). Zhan and Pandey (2004) add that limited job opportunities, unpaid child support, and insufficient assistance programs further reduce any benefit mothers might gain from working.

Gender Role Norms

Gender role norms also influence working mothers and student parents. Gender role norms establish the rules of acceptable male and female behavior in society and are quite flexible, ranging from traditional to egalitarian (Slan-Jerusalim & Chen, 2009). Despite this flexibility, society continues to encourage and expect traditional roles (Elliott, 2008) and in fact, social behavior continues to follow the expected traditional pattern (Anderson & Sabatelli, 2003; Cunningham, 2008). These traditionally patterned gender role behaviors require women to take on the burden of homemaking and childcare while men are required to take on the burden of financial support of the family through employment (Cunningham, 2008; Elliott, 2008; Jackson & Scharman, 2009; Slan-Jerusalim & Chen, 2009), which is often called the “*Breadwinner versus Caregiver*” ideology.

The increasing number of single parents, working mothers, and dual earner couples has placed women in direct conflict with traditional gender role norms (Cunningham, 2008; Haddock & Bowling, 2001). Since student parents are often female and work while studying, they also experience this conflict. Consider this; if women adhere to the employment norms, they are violating the gender role norms by engaging in the breadwinner role. In the effort to fulfill both employment and gender role norms, women engage in two full time jobs (Jackson & Scharman,

2002) because they are still expected to fulfill all homemaking and childcare duties after completing employment duties (Elliott, 2008; Slan-Jerusalim & Chen, 2009).

These competing expectations create role strain, role conflict, and role overload for working mothers. Student parents also experience role strain, role conflict, and role overload as a function of both student role expectations and employee role expectations combined with those of the caregiver role. Previously reported research states that when working parents and student parents experience role strain, role conflict, and role overload they may quit working (Elliott, 2008; Jacobs & Winslow, 2004; Peters, 2008) or quit school (Home, 1998; Jacobs & King, 2002; Ray, et al., 2000). The working parent literature has connected this exit to feelings of guilt (Guendouzi, 2006; Jackson & Scharman, 2002; Medina & Magnuson, 2009) and the student parent literature suggests a similar but unexplored connection (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992; Mosee, 2009; Quimby & O'Brien, 2006).

Parenting Norms

Extending from both family norms and gender role norms are parenting norms. Family norms suggest that there will be two parents in the family, generally a mother and father dyad (Haddock & Bowling, 2001; Medina & Magnuson, 2009). Gender role norms support the expectation that fathers provide financial resources (Cunningham, 2008; Elliott, 2008; Jackson & Scharman, 2009; Slan-Jerusalim & Chen, 2009) while mothers take care of children and home needs (Guendouzi, 2006; Johnston & Swanson, 2007; Medina & Magnuson, 2009). The social norm governing parenting that influences both working mothers and student parents is the norm known as the "*intensive mothering ideology*."

In 1996, Sharon Hays introduced the term *intensive mothering*. Intensive mothering, according to Hays, is a parenting norm constructed over time and based on three simple tenets: the mother is the caregiver, the child's needs take precedence over any other needs, and finally, childrearing is the most important task of motherhood. Hays (1996) stated that childrearing ideals are socially constructed, culturally bound ideals that vary over time due to economic, religious, and academic factors. However, Douglas and Michaels (2004) found that the intensive mothering ideal has not changed since the 1950s and in fact has become even more pervasive.

Hays (1996) found that the current ideal began to form in the 19th century when the separation of domestic duties and paid employment began creating a private (family) versus public (work) life. Because of the belief at the time that women were moral and emotional creatures, the task of creating a more virtuous world fell on them, and they would accomplish this task by creating homes that were havens from the work world. A mother's job at this time was to teach children how to behave as an adult in ways that were beneficial to both family and nation. Shifts in the understanding of children based on academic advancements in psychology and development combined with shifts in religious ideology and shifts to a market economy led parenting ideals to shift focus to the needs of the child instead of the needs of the family or nation. These shifts continued toward the current intensive mothering ideal after the introduction of parenting manuals by such experts as Dr. Spock, T. Berry Brazelton, and Penelope Leach (Douglas & Michaels, 2004; Hays, 1996).

Inherent in the intensive mothering ideal is the belief that mothering is instinctive for women, nurturing is "hard-wired" in the feminine psyche, and women long for a sense of fulfillment that only comes from being a mother (Hays, 1996; Medina & Magnuson, 2009). Brazelton and Cramer (1990) assert that feminine identity development certainly includes these

aspects, which are blatantly obvious when female toddlers play with dolls and pretend to be homemakers. Douglas and Michaels (2004) disagree with these assertions stating instead that society indoctrinates women into this belief system from birth. Brown (2010) asserts that other mothers support the intensive mothering ideal along with the media, and females internalize these messages over the life span. It is the intensive mothering ideal that sets women up for ambivalence toward the mothering role by creating expectations that are not and cannot be realized (Brown, 2010; Douglas & Michaels, 2004).

Mothers, both working and student, are bombarded by messages about how and why they must be good mothers. These messages come from the news programs, television shows, books, magazines, and other mothers (Brown, 2010; Douglas & Michaels, 2004; Guendouzi, 2006; Hays, 1996; Springer, et al., 2009). Mothers are told that their involvement outside the home places their children at risk for such negative outcomes as obesity (Medina & Magnuson, 2009), academic failure (Heyns & Catsambis, 1986; Milne, et al., 1986), poor cognitive development (Baum, 2003; Brooks-Gunn, Wen-Jui, & Waldfogel, 2002; Waldfogel, 2007), psychological issues such as attention deficit /hyperactivity disorder (Medina & Magnuson, 2009), and increased engagement in delinquent behaviors (Vander Ven, et al., 2001). Though research does not fully support such outcomes, they are difficult messages for mothers to ignore.

The intensive mothering ideology states that mothers should be the primary caregiver within the family unit even at the expense of her own needs, desires, and aspirations, and that this care should completely fulfill all financial, physical, and emotional needs of the child (Douglas & Michaels, 2004; Hays, 1996; Medina & Magnuson, 2009). Since this ideology demands also that mothers be available to fulfill a child's needs at all times (Brown, 2010) it may seem to deny any activity outside the home that would separate mother and child (Guendouzi,

2006; Johnston & Swanson, 2007; Medina & Magnuson, 2009). Christopher (2009) argues that employment is fine under the tenets of intensive mothering if the mother remains the primary caregiver and the child benefits from the mother's employment directly. However, the research on working mothers finds that mothers are experiencing cognitive dissonance from the conflicting demands of parenting and employment roles (Medina & Magnuson, 2009) that often leaves them feeling ambivalent (Brown 2010; Christopher, 2009) and guilty (Brown, 2010; Douglas & Michaels, 2004; Guendouzi, 2006; Hays, 1996; Medina & Magnuson, 2009). Taniguchi and Kaufman (2007) stated that mothers feel they must also limit their school activities in accordance with the intensive mothering ideology, and several studies mentioned that student parents experience guilt related to the conflicts between parenting and school roles (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992; Gerrard & Roberts, 2006; Mosee, 2009; Springer, et al., 2009; Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2005). Since working mothers and student parents perceive that they cannot fulfill the roles of either student or employee without violating the intensive mothering ideology, women experience role strain, role conflict, and role overload from attempts to juggle the competing demands and expectations of parent, employee, and student roles (Erdwins et al., 2001; Quimby & O'Brien, 2006). As previously mentioned, the combination of role strain, role conflict, and role overload may encourage the student parent to drop out of school (Giancola, et al., 2009; Home, 1998; Jacobs & King, 2002; Ray, et al, 2000).

At this point, it should be clear that shifting economic factors, governmental policies, and contradictory social norms have created a conundrum for women. The increasing number of single parent families places women in violation of both family and parenting norms that expect women to be part of a parenting dyad and serve as caregivers. Family, gender role and parenting norms place women in opposition to employment norms that encourage all United States citizens

to be economically self-sufficient even women. However, attempts to adhere to the employment norm places women in violation of family, gender role and parenting norms. The increasing number of women pursuing higher education and employment places women in violation of both gender role and parenting norms. Douglas and Michaels (2004) state that the competing ideals placed upon women leaves them in a position where no matter what they do it is insufficient, and they add that the intensive mothering ideology is the most detrimental ideal of all as it demands an unattainable level of perfection from mothers.

Student Attrition

Throughout this review, mention has been made of the working mother or student parent's decision to quit the conflicting roles that are causing feelings of guilt. The working mother literature calls this decision *opting out* (Peters, 2008; Springer, et al., 2009). Non-traditional student literature calls this decision either *stopping out* or *dropping out* (Choy, 2002; Horn & Carroll, 1996; Horn & Carroll, 1998). Bean and Metzner (1985) like many universities call it *attrition*, and it is not limited to universities in the United States (Bamber & Tett, 2000; Laing & Robinson, 2003; Tones, Fraser, Elder, & White, 2009). Tinto (2006) states that *retention*, attrition's opposite, is a highly studied aspect of higher education because state and federal funding agencies use it as a measure of university successfulness.

Stop Out Versus Dropouts

It is important to distinguish between students who "stop out" and those who "drop out." Stop outs are students who stop attending the university for a period but return later, and dropouts are students who stop attending and never return (Horn and Carroll, 1998). According to Horn and Carroll (1998) non-traditional students frequently stop out (64%) and many of them

(36%) never return or dropout; however, Milam (2009) reports that 38.9% of non-traditional students dropout, and Choy (2002) reports that 27% of the population stop out the first year and 47% did not return after 5 years. These numbers become more concerning when broken down by non-traditional level. For example, at public 4-year institutions, 50 % of highly non-traditional students dropped out, and at public 2-year institutions, 62% of highly non-traditional students dropped out in the first three years (Choy, 2002). Horn and Carroll (1996) and Choy (2002) also found that graduation rates among non-traditional students at 4-year institutions varied depending on level with 42% of minimally non-traditional students and 17% of moderately non-traditional students graduating after five years; however, the five year graduation rates for highly non-traditional students fell to a mere 11% . Considering Choy's (2002) findings that 58% of non-traditional students are highly non-traditional, a category that often describes student parents (Horn & Carroll, 1996; Huff & Thorpe, 1997), it would seem imperative to understand the mechanisms that push non-traditional students to leave the university without completing a degree.

Theories about Attrition

Keith, et al (2006) offered a review of deficit and resilience based theories presented in relation to attrition. The research found no support for age-related declines in learning and cognition that would serve as deficits for non-traditional students and thus explain attrition; however, the authors did find support for the hypothesis that age provides the individual with a variety of tools that support resilience in the face of difficulties and may encourage persistence (Keith et al., 2006). Though intended to explain the high rates of non-traditional student attrition, such models failed to offer any insight into the phenomenon. Another frequently cited theory of student attrition is the one presented by Vincent Tinto (1988). Tinto (1988) highlighted

that attrition is a longitudinal process occurring in stages of separation from family/peers, transition into the university community, and incorporation into the social and academic environments of the university. Difficulties and challenges exist in all three stages, but Tinto (1988) suggests that it is a failure to complete the academic and social integration process that leads to dropout. Criticisms of this model include exclusion of non-traditional students and the community colleges that more frequently serve non-traditional students in the model's design; unfortunately, attempts to explore the applicability of the model to these two populations is limited and has met with mixed results (Ashar & Skenes, 1993; Deil-Amen, 2005).

An alternative model of non-traditional student attrition that considers how student characteristics, academic variables, environmental factors, and psychological factors combine with GPA to inform the decision to drop out was offered by Bean and Metzner (1985). Bean and Metzner (1985) recognized that non-traditional students are often commuters and do not live on campus; therefore the social integration aspects of Tinto's model may not apply to them and may in fact be over-ridden by socializing agents unrelated to the university. The model is flexible enough to allow institution specific criterion to be included in study, can apply to the various sub-groups of non-traditional students individually or collectively for cross comparisons, and is applicable to a variety of institutional types such as commuter or 4-year campuses (Bean & Metzner, 1985). It is extremely interesting that only one study exists that used this model (Chartrand, 1992) and only a few studies cite it (Cavote & Kopera-Frye, 2006; Deil-Amen, 2005; Naretto, 1995; Tinto, 1988).

Approaches Used to Reduce Attrition

In the efforts to reduce attrition, universities have applied a variety of tactics focused on the social and academic integration proposed by Tinto. The simplest method for reducing attrition is to involve non-traditional students with the campus through peer and faculty interactions but these methods have mixed results (Hernandez, Hogan, Hathaway, & Lovell, 1999; Naretto, 1995). A second, intervention described by Cavote and Koper-Frye (2006) is the *first year experience* course that schedules non-traditional students in a set of classes designed to inform them about the campus and enrich their study skills. Such programs proved ineffective with this population (Cavote & Koper-Frye, 2006). Another intervention is the *learning community* for non-traditional students that establishes cohorts of students moving through programs together along a preselected path. This type of intervention appears more effective with the non-traditional student population (Austin, 2006; Hendricks, Kari, and Richter-Norgel, 2000). Searches for additional studies of retention efforts aimed at non-traditional students produced no results; however, the literature continues to mention the high attrition rates of non-traditional students (Ray, et al, 2000; Springer, et al., 2009).

Alternative Theoretical Explanations for Guilt and Attrition

Although theories exist to explain non-traditional student attrition, universities seem unable to apply these models in an effective way and the attrition rates of this population continue to be a concern (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Choy, 2002; Ray, et al., 2000; Springer, et al., 2009; Tinto, 1988). Efforts to increase both academic and social integration succeed with some non-traditional students but not all of them. Since some non-traditional students continue through to graduation despite role strain, role conflict, and role overload, conflicts based on

social norms only explain some of the attrition in this population. Something seems to be missing. Perhaps what is missing is the inclusion of those characteristics unique to non-traditional students such as their position in a family and their advanced psychosocial development. An exploration of theories related to families and development may help inform potential connections between guilt and attrition in this population.

A review of the working mother and non-traditional student literature identified four commonly used theories: Erikson's Psychosocial Development theory, Ecological Systems theory, the Family Life Course theory, and Family Systems theory (Buehler, O'Brien, & Walls, 2011; Chartrand, 1992). Although these theories are generally tied to the working mother literature (Buehler, et al., 2011) other authors tied them to student parents. For example, Chartrand (1992) suggested using Erikson's psychosocial developmental theory to understand the experiences of non-traditional students. Hall (2003), connected Family Systems theory as applied in the working mother literature to the study of student academic and career achievement, while Renn and Arnold (2003) used Ecological Systems theory to explain the influence of peers on academic success in college. Such theories may help inform the experiences of non-traditional students related to attrition and feelings of guilt.

Developmental Theories

Chartrand (1992) pointed out that universities need to view student adjustment through the lens of psychosocial development because these tasks are different for the traditional and non-traditional student. Erik Erikson's psychosocial developmental theory describes human development in terms of the impact of biological, psychological, and social influences on the individual as they progress along the life span (Newman & Newman, 2009). The theory presents

development as taking place in stages marked by distinct crises or turning points, which may appear linear but are not (Atalay, 2007). Atalay (2007) adds that the crises presented as the core of each stage appear dichotomous but are actually the opposite ends of a continuum of resolution. What is important to recognize in relation to non-traditional students is the fact that crises from earlier stages can return in later stages and crises from later stages may be faced earlier in the life course than expected (Slater, 2003; Whitbourne, Sneed & Sayer, 2009). It is also important to note that crises not resolved in the appropriate stage increase the difficulty experienced in the resolution of subsequent stages (Atalay, 2007).

Erikson envisioned eight age-graded developmental stages; however, researchers building on the model as Erikson requested (Atalay, 2007) have identified two additional stages and suggested adjustments in the approximate timing of entry into these stages (Newman & Newman, 2009). According to Newman and Newman (2009), the current model breaks the stages down as follows:

- Trust versus mistrust (birth-2 years of age)
- Autonomy versus shame and doubt (2-3 years of age)
- Initiative versus guilt (4-6 years of age)
- Industry versus inferiority (6-12 years of age)
- Group identity versus alienation (12-18 years of age)
- Individual identity versus identity confusion (18-24 years of age)
- Intimacy versus isolation (24-34 years of age)

- Generativity versus stagnation (34-60 years of age)
- Integrity versus despair (60-75 years of age)
- Immortality versus extinction (75 and older)

Traditional students are typically 18 to 24 years old, which places them in the *individual identity versus identity confusion stage*. Individuals in this stage are working on such issues as breaking away from parents, selecting a future career, and establishing an identity (Newman & Newman, 2009), which Erikson believed consisted of occupational choice, adoption of religious and political beliefs, and internalizing a set of self-selected values (Johnson & Nozick, 2011). Due to the defining characteristics of non-traditional students, they may be in the *intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation, integrity versus despair, or immortality versus extinction* stages. Individuals in these stages are working on such issues such as finding an intimate partner, creating a family, establishing a career, becoming involved members in the community, working to better society for the future, accepting the life they have led, facing death, coping with the loss of loved ones and friends, and dealing with the physical challenges of aging (Newman & Newman, 2009).

Mercer (2010) found that returning to school alters the identity of non-traditional students by allowing them to finally fulfill developmental tasks from earlier stages that were blocked or denied to them, increasing the student's self-esteem and confidence, encouraging self-discovery, and providing a healthier model for the student's children to follow. Smith (2008) suggested that higher education offers non-traditional students a pathway to becoming generative individuals in society. Unfortunately, juggling the multiple roles of student, parent, and possibly employee leave the student parent feeling guilty (Mercer, 2010). Limited or no support from family and

friends for the educational goals of the student heightens this guilt and may play into the decision to withdraw from the university (Giancola, et al., 2009; Kasworm, 2008; Naretto, 1995; Quimby & O'Brien, 2006).

When a non-traditional student is returning or entering as a first time student due to the loss of a job or divorce, they may experience issues tied to trust versus mistrust. The non-traditional student may feel like life is “out of control” due to the transitions taking place (Bowl, 2001), which may elicit issues related to autonomy and shame; likewise, feeling insecure in the ability to perform academically after years away from educational environments (Keith, 2007; O'Donnell & Tobell, 2007) may elicit issues with initiative versus guilt. The non-traditional student may struggle with role strain, role conflict, and role overload (Home, 1998; Medved & Heisler, 2002; Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2005) that engender issues with industry and inferiority. The loss of marital and employee roles may elicit an identity crisis for the non-traditional student (Mercer, 2010), and may create issues with intimacy versus isolation as well. Along with these issues, non-traditional students are also dealing with being “off time” (Rook, et al., 1989) in their academic pursuits and violating social norms related to family, gender roles, employment, and parenting that have been established as causing feelings of guilt (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992; Mosee, 2009; Springer, et al., 2009; Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2005). However, as previously mentioned (Smith, 2008), some non-traditional students may find the return to school beneficial to their personal goals of giving back to society and leaving the world a better place for the next generation (generativity), which helps the student to develop integrity instead of despair. Knowing the developmental tasks non-traditional students are working through can help universities develop counseling and support services aimed at reducing the likelihood that non-traditional students will become overwhelmed and thus reduce attrition (Chartrand, 1992).

A second developmental theory applied to both working mothers (Buehler, et al., 2011) and non-traditional students (Renn & Arnold, 2003) is Ecological Systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) that focuses on the interactions between the individual, the environment, and the context over time to either enhance or hinder development. Bronfenbrenner's theory (1979) identified five spheres within which the individual's development takes place: *microsystems*, *mesosystems*, *exosystems*, *macrosystems*, and *chronosystems*. Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008) applied the theory to the development of families as well, which makes the theory applicable to student parents. Fine (1985) summarized *microsystems* as the daily, face-to-face interactions that take place between individuals in a specific environment such as between parent and child, student and teacher, employer and employee; *mesosystems* as the interactions between spheres such as work, school, home, and church; *exosystems* as government, mass media, and educational systems; and *macrosystems* as including social mores and cultural beliefs. White and Klein (2002) summarized the *chronosystem* as the time in history the individual exists. Darling (2007) stresses the focus of the theory on the active nature of the individual and Bronfenbreener's belief that the individual's activity in the developmental process is bi-directional.

Renn and Arnold (2003) suggest consideration of the *developmentally instigative characteristics* suggested by Bronfenbrenner to explain college student success or dropout. These characteristics determine how the individual is an active participant in their own development. They influence such things as how the individual elicits or discourages interactions from others or the environment, how the individual reacts to and explores new environments, how involved the individual is in seeking out developmental activities, and how the individual's beliefs about self-efficacy and agency influence the developmental process.

Because individuals are involved in multiple systems, it is also important to consider how the systems reinforce or undermine each other through contradictory messages, expectations, and demands (Renn & Arnold, 2003). This collision of spheres, which Bronfenbrenner (1979) referred to as an individual and environmental mismatch, creates stress that forces the individual to adapt (develop).

It is easy to see how this theory might apply to both working mothers and student parents. Both individuals are engaged in multiple microsystems that create multiple mesosystem interactions. The conflicting demands of parenting, work, and school combine with government policies such as welfare reform and absentee policies for classes to create conflicting exosystem interactions for the mother that are heightened by the current social norms of family, gender roles, employment, and parenting found at the macrosystem level. Mothers facing such high demands must find a way to adapt. Reducing the number of conflicting demands such as dropping out of school serves as an adaptive process based on self-efficacy and agency beliefs that limits further academic development.

Family Theories

Family theories serve to clarify observed behaviors in the family, define roles of individuals in the family, and provide rules to facilitate family functioning (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008; White & Klein, 2002). Because families exist within a certain historical time, cultural and ethnic milieu, and social environment, social norms drawn from such influences often define the roles and rules within the family unit (White & Klein, 2002). Adaptability in the family system is a critical element because it is through adaptability that families adjust to stress and change (Anderson & Sabatelli, 2003). The families of both working mothers and student

parents must be adaptable in order to handle the conflict between the demands of society and the needs of the family.

The Family Life Course theory states that families develop in a similar way to individuals through a series of stages known as transitions that follow a socially prescribed timing norm (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008; Hanna, 2007). The timing norm, often referred to as the social clock (Rook, et al., 1989), determines when certain activities or accomplishments should take place; for example, an individual goes to college directly after graduating high school, enters the workforce upon graduating college, and then marries after establishing a career (Hanna, 2007; Shengming, 1997). Individuals not following the timing norm go “off-time” and may experience difficulties (Anderson & Sabatelli, 2003; Rook, et al., 1989). Non- traditional students have gone “off-time” in relation to college entry and according to Rook, Catalano, and Dooley (1989) may experience feelings of guilt, shame, and anxiety; receive criticism from peers; and may lose social support from extended family, peers, and employers.

In the Family Life Course theory, the family has positions such as mother, father, brother, or sister that are governed by rules based on social norms, culture, the ages of individual family members, and the developmental stage of the family. As the family system develops, it experiences a series of normative events such individuals marrying, having children, going off to college or military service, developing a career, retiring, and dealing with death (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008; Hanna, 2007). These transitions, also called *nodal events*, may change the individual or family’s status, identity, or roles. As the family moves forward through time, the linkage of these nodal events become the *family trajectory*; however, *transition reversals* can happen causing stress and altering the family trajectory in ways that promote either growth or disruption (Anderson & Sabatelli, 2003; Hanna, 2007; White & Klein, 2002). An example of a

transition reversal that applies to both working mothers and student parents is the return to the work force or the classroom of a mother that was previously a homemaker due to divorce, which, as previously mentioned, places the mother in conflict with social norms and causes guilt.

Family Systems theory identifies the family as a single unit that has roles, rules, boundaries, activities, and goals. The system relies on feedback to determine successful movement toward goals or identify obstacles that prevent reaching goals with the primary goal of the system being homeostasis (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008; White & Klein, 2002). Though stress in the family system can be either random or situational, Murray Bowen (1978) stated that the primary source of stress in the family system is the conflicting needs of *individuality* and *togetherness*. *Individuality*, according to Bowen (1978), is the individual family member's desire to be autonomous and productive separate from the family system; while *togetherness* is the member's need to remain connected to the family system for fulfillment of love and approval needs. A key element of this theory is that change in one part of the system requires change in the rest of the system in order to maintain homeostasis (Hall, 2003).

This theory applies readily to both working mothers and student parents. Consider when a mother chooses to leave the home in order to return to work or education; she is changing the activities required from the other members of the family system. Spouses or partners may need to perform more childcare and housekeeping duties, older children may need to assist more with these tasks as well, and younger children may have to become comfortable in the care of others. If the system or its members hold *pathogenic beliefs* about such changes being harmful to the system, the mother may experience feelings of guilt and anxiety (Hall, 2003).

Each of the theories listed easily apply to the experiences of both working mothers and non-traditional students. This study used the ecological systems theory because of the emphasis it places on multiple influences on development especially the individual's active participation and because it applies to both individuals and families who are developing simultaneously with each other. Non-traditional students choose to enter or return to school for a variety of reasons, they participate in multiple systems, and those systems have competing demands and expectations of the non-traditional student. The student brings with them a variety of beliefs and traits that enable them to handle easily the conflicting demands of multiple roles or forces them to adapt in order to do so. Ecological systems theory accepts dropping out or stopping out as a developmental adaptation to a situation that the individual does not have the ability to cope with at this moment. From an ecological systems point of view, stop-out and dropout behavior is an adaptive process that allows the student to develop within their lived experience and any guilt they experience reflects their beliefs, which extend from social norms.

The Role of Social Support in Non-Traditional Student Attrition

A recurring theme in the student parent literature is *social support*. Though not presented here as a theory to explain non-traditional student attrition or guilt, the theme was mentioned often enough in the literature (Bamber & Tett, 2000; Chao & Good, 2004; Christie, Tett, Cree, Hounsell & McCune, 2008; Giancola, et al., 2009; Kasworm, 2008; Naretto, 1995; Quimby & O'Brien, 2006) to engender curiosity about the role social support might play in non-traditional student retention efforts. What has come out of the literature is the recognition that instrumental (tangible things such as funds or childcare), informational (advice on coping), and appraisal (praise and validation) supports are extremely important to the success of non-traditional students (Bauman, Wang, DeLeon, Kafentzis, Zavala-Lopez, & Lindsey, 2004; Chao & Good,

2004; Naretto, 1995; Quimby & O'Brien, 2006). Giancola, Grawitch, and Borchert (2009) included instrumental social support as a test variable in a study of stress coping among non-traditional students, but did not find a strong correlation to life satisfaction or general well-being in the sample. However, other researchers found a clear connection to dissatisfaction with the educational experience (Bamber & Tett, 2000; Christie, et al., 2008) that could have driven students out if other sources of support were not available. Kasworm (2008) identifies these additional sources of social support that exist at the university level as non-traditional student services, non-traditional student specific orientations, learning communities or cohort classes for non-traditional students, and non-traditional student organizations. Though not the focus of this study, social support questions may be relevant to the question of student attrition and were therefore, included in the study.

Summary

It is clear from the literature that working mothers feel guilt related to their conflicting roles of mother and worker because of the intensive mothering ideology, and that working mothers “opt out” of work in order to reduce this guilt. Student parent literature offers limited support for the experience of guilt but does not make such a clear connection to withdrawal from school. This section included a brief review of the literature related to working mothers and student parents, clarified the connections between the two populations, explored the social factors influencing the populations, and reviewed several theories presented to explain the experiences of these two populations. Chapter Three covers the study, describes the participants, and details the methods and procedures used to conduct the study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

As previously mentioned, the current literature on non-traditional students' emotional experiences is limited (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992; Mosee, 2009; Quimby & O'Brien, 2006); specifically, the impact of the emotional experience on the student's behavior has not been evaluated as an independent factor. Current models for understanding non-traditional student behavior (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Tinto, 1988) fail to consider the developmental tasks faced by non-traditional students or the ramifications perceived by the students for not complying with social norms (Chartrand, 1992; Cunningham, 2008; Hall, 2003; Jackson & Scharman, 2002; Renn & Arnold, 2003). This study fills gaps that exist in the literature concerning the impact of the emotion guilt on the student's experience, identifies a more current demographic make-up of the population, and explores the relationships between non-traditional student characteristics, the experience of guilt, and the impact of that guilt on the student. The study also evaluates the utility of modifying the Test of Self Conscious Affect-3 (short version) to identify highly guilt prone students who may be at a greater risk for dropping out of college. The results can inform retention efforts at universities and the development of support services for both student and working parents.

Sampling

In order to ensure the appropriate demographic responded to the survey, the study used purposeful, convenience and snowball sampling methods. There are two national organizations that represent non-traditional students and both have websites with membership contact lists.

The first organization, the Association of Non-Traditional Students in Higher Education

(ANTSHE) has two websites: one public (ANTSHE.org) that has a list of 446 members, and a member's only site (myantshe.org) that has a list of 1200 contacts. The second organization, the Higher Education Alliance for Advocates of Students with Children (HEAASC) has only one site (HEAASC.org) with a list of 34 member contacts. Both organizations granted permission to send the participation request out to the members, which provided a purposeful and convenient sample to draw from.

An internet search for universities whose websites mentioned *non-traditional, adult, returning student, off-campus, or commuter student* services identified an additional 25 universities to contact (see Table 1). Schools fell into five regions: northwest, southwest, central, northeast, and southeast. Selection criteria for contact included: offering some form of non-traditional student service, not belonging to either ANTSHE or HEAASC, and having either a university employee designated to serve this population or a student organization serving this population. Schools varied on size, public versus private, two year versus four year, and campus versus online delivery.

Table 1

Characteristics of the Additional Universities Invited to Participate

University	Type	Term
Michigan State University	Public	4-year
Georgia State University	Public	4-year
Southern Illinois University- Carbondale	Public	4-year
University of Wyoming	Public	4-year
University of California- Santa Barbara	Public	4-year
Endicott College	Private	4-year
Columbus State University	Private	4-year
St. Catharine's University	Private	4-year
Gonzaga University	Private	4-year

Table 1 (continued)

University of Denver	Private	4-year
Adirondack Community College	Public	2-year
Cleveland State Community College	Public	2-year
McLennan Community College	Public	2-year
Lane Community College	Public	2-year
Scottsdale Community College	Public	2-year
Latter Day Saints Business College	Private	2-year
Pima Community College	Private	2-year
Southeast Technical Institute	Private	2-year
Calhoun Community College	Private	2-year
Norwalk Community College	Private	2-year
American Public University	Online	Varies
Remington College	Online	Varies
Grantham University	Online	Varies
Aspen University	Online	Varies
Azusa Pacific Online	Online	Varies

Note: Community colleges listed offer general education courses as well as specialty technical trade skills training. All schools have at least 1000 students, and with the exception of the online only schools, offer some form of services for non-traditional students.

Once contacted regarding participation, five schools with membership in either ANTSHE or HEAASC asked for permission either to forward the request for participants to student organizations or to post the request on organization Facebook pages, thus creating a snowball sample. Two of the member schools did not provide student numbers; however, three schools did. North Carolina State University Charlotte reported sharing the invite with the 142 members of their Veteran's organization and the 206 members of their non-traditional student group, Michigan State University shared with the 210 members of their student organization, and the State University of New York Cortland shared with 115 members of the adult student group

there. The 25 schools contacted from the internet search (see Table 1) received instructions to forward the letter to non-traditional students on their campuses; however, it is unknown how many students received the request from these schools.

Based on the membership numbers provided, the study went out to 6,194 potential participants. Of the requests sent, 186 participants responded for a response rate of 3.0%. In order to determine if results describe the total population of non-traditional students in the United States, a sample size was calculated using online software provided by Raosoft.com (2004). Setting alpha at .05 and estimating a total population of 20,000 non-traditional students, the sample size needed for statistical power is 377. As previously noted, 186 participants responded; however, the final sample ($n = 152$) was reduced due to incomplete surveys or participants not meeting selection criteria.

There are a few possible explanations for this low response rate. First, piloting participants were able to complete the survey in 30 minutes, which became the approximate completion time reported to participants; however, study participants reported a mean completion time of 45 minutes and 31 seconds. Participants may have opted not to take the survey because of the time commitment needed to complete it or may have started but quit when the survey took too long to complete. Additionally, participants received the request during the first weeks of school, which are typically very busy transitional times for non-traditional students. In the effort to prepare for classes, adjust work schedules, and organize family activities, participants may have viewed the survey as a non-priority and simply ignored it. Finally, the period of data collection was limited to four weeks, which may have denied some participants the opportunity to participate when they actually had time to.

Informed Consent

Potential research participants received an initial invitation letter by email (see Appendix A) and a reminder email letter (see Appendix B) that described the purpose of the study, outlined participant rights, and highlighted the voluntary nature of the study. The letter explained that students would complete a survey and two assessment instruments and provided a link to the survey. Voluntary completion and submission of the survey and assessment instruments (see Appendix C) by the participant provided informed consent to participate in the study. The invitation and reminder email letters went out exactly two weeks apart and the reminder letter included the deadline for participation date.

Participants

Initially, 186 participants responded to the survey; however, 26 responses were incomplete and thus unusable. An additional eight responses were ineligible because currently enrolled non-traditional students did not submit them. These responses were submitted by traditional students ($n = 5$), university employees ($n = 2$), and one student who had graduated. After dropping the unusable responses, 152 useable responses remained. These 152 participants self-identified as non-traditional based on the defining characteristics of non-traditional students presented in Chapter Two. Table 2 provides a list of those characteristics, lists how many participants claimed the characteristic, and the percentage of respondents identified by each characteristic.

Participants were highly non-traditional ($n = 119$), reporting four or more non-traditional characteristics ($m = 4.84$, range 1 to 10). The most frequently cited characteristics were financial independence ($n = 121$, 79.6%), educational gaps ($n = 106$, 69.7%), and married/partnered ($n =$

93, 61.2%). The majority of participants were female (n = 110) and over 30 years of age (n = 101). Two respondents were international students and the remaining respondents reported being predominantly Caucasian (n = 118), African American (n = 15), or mixed race (n = 9). One respondent reported being Hispanic American, one Native American/Pacific Islander, one Turkish American, one Irish, one Native American/African, and one African. Over half of the participants were parents (n = 81, 53.3%) and 30 (19.7%) parents self-identified as single parents.

Table 2

Identifying Non-Traditional Student Characteristics

Characteristic	Frequency (n)	Percent
Age (over 25 years old)	85	55.9%
Married/Partnered	93	61.2%
Widowed/Divorced	37	24.3%
Parent/Foster Parent	86	56.6%
Caregiver	7	4.6%
Delayed Entry	63	41.4%
Education Gap	106	69.7%
FT Employee	49	32.2%
PT Student	40	26.3%
GED	18	11.8%
Financially Independent	121	79.6%
Other*	7	4.6%

Note: Participants selected multiple characteristics (m = 4.84, range 1-10). Characteristics are those used to define the population in the literature. The abbreviation FT stands for *full-time*, and the abbreviation PT stands for *part-time*.

* Other characteristics listed by participants included being disabled, being a Veteran, and being a grandparent raising grandchildren.

Procedures

The study used Survey Monkey, a web-based survey provider, to collect participant responses to a three-part survey (see Appendix C). The first part of the survey collected demographic information about participants drawn from the defining characteristics of non-

traditional students and the research questions. Feedback from professors, peers, and recent graduates helped to streamline the survey design, ensure question appropriateness and placement, and test the survey's functionality before sending to participants in the staged piloting process recommended in survey design literature (Andrews, Nonnecke, & Preece, 2003; Sprenkle & Piercy, 2005). The survey also used a page design with related questions grouped together on a single, short page and question skips to redirect participants to the questions most relevant to their experience (Peytchev, Couper, McCabe, & Crawford, 2006; Sprenkle & Piercy, 2005), which Peytchev et al (2006) found reduced time to take the survey and increased the likelihood of complete survey responses. This section of the survey contained 48 open, closed and multiple-choice questions that took an estimated 15 minutes for testers to complete.

The second section of the survey contained the Test of Self-Conscious Affect-3 short version (Tangney, et al., 2000) modified to fit non-traditional students as approved by the instrument's designer (see Appendix D). The final question on the demographics section asked participants to identify as a single student without children, single parent, married/partnered student without children, or married/partnered parent. Based on option selected, the participant skipped to the appropriate instrument version. A sample question included instructions for completing the assessment instrument, and participants then completed 11 additional scenarios similar to the sample. Once finished with the modification, participants completed the original TOSCA-3 short version (Tangney, et al., 2000) in section three for comparison. Participants took an average of 45 minutes and 31 seconds to complete the entire survey (range 3:35 to 22:12:13).

Instruments

A review of the available assessment instruments for guilt reveals a few interesting points. First, the instruments available to measure guilt rely on either scenarios or checklists to identify either state or trait components of guilt (Ferguson & Crowley, 1997). Second, assessment instruments employ projective, self-report, single-item ratings scales, or interview techniques to collect data on the emotional experiences of participants (Kugler & Jones, 1992), but continue to confound guilt with shame and morality (Ferguson & Crowley, 1997; Tangney, 1990; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Finally, though many researchers have come to agree that guilt and shame are distinct from each other based on perceptions of personal behavior and the public versus private nature of both emotions, few measures include such distinctions (Cohen, et al., 2011).

The Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA). Building on earlier work with the Self-Conscious Affect and Attribution Inventory (SCAAI), Tangney developed the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA) (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). The TOSCA, like the SCAAI, relies on scenarios to evaluate trait guilt, trait shame, pride, externalization, and detachment using a 5-point scale (Ferguson & Crowley, 1997; Stromsten, Henningsson, Holm, & Sundbom, 2009). The use of scenarios generated by subjects during the modeling phase of instrument development provides high ecological validity for the instrument and construct validity is supported by interrelationships in the subscales and to other measures of shame and guilt (Stromsten et al., 2009). However, Ferguson and Crowley (1997) challenge the discriminant validity because of these same relationships to other scales. In a validation study of the TOSCA, Woien, Ernst, Patock-Peckham, and Nagoshi (2003) reported TOSCA reliability for shame ($\alpha = .77$), guilt ($\alpha = .68$), externalization ($\alpha = .69$), detachment ($\alpha = .66$), alpha pride ($\alpha = .56$), and beta pride ($\alpha =$

.52). Leskela, Dieperink, and Thuras (2002) used the TOSCA with veterans to explore guilt and shame related to Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and found reliability scores of .85 (shame) and .75 (guilt) based on test-retest and scores of .76 (shame) and .66 (guilt) for internal consistency.

Researchers have translated the TOSCA to use with Hebrew, German, Italian, French, Swedish, and Hungarian populations and obtained similar results as those reported by Tangney et al (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Other researchers have used the TOSCA in the development of additional scales focused on shame (Rizvi, 2010) and body image (Thompson, Dinnel, & Dill, 2003). Over time, the TOSCA has been criticized for focusing only on interpersonal relationships (Thompson, et al., 2003), actions instead of emotion (Giner-Sorolla, Piazza, & Espinosa, 2011), and only on the maladaptive forms of shame and adaptive forms of guilt (Luyten, Fontaine, & Corveleyn, 2002). In response to this criticism, the TOSCA-2 was developed that included a Maladaptive Guilt scale; however, the correlation to the shame scale was so high (.74) that it was unclear if the new scale was actually measuring guilt or shame and it was dropped (Tangney & Dearing, 2002).

Test of Self-Conscious Affect-3 (Short Version). Tangney, Dearing, Wagner, and Gramzow developed a third version of the TOSCA in 2000. Like its predecessor, the TOSCA-3 was developed using scenarios and responses generated by participants drawn from both college student (n = 834) and adult (n = 812) samples (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). It is reliable with various ethnic groups and languages such as Japanese (Hasui, Kitamura, Tamaki, Takahashi, Masuda, & Ozeki, 2009) and German (Rusch, Corrigan, Bohus, Jacob, Brueck, & Lieb, 2007), and applies to both healthy and clinical samples (Rusch, et al., 2007; Schoenleber & Berenbaum, 2010; Schoenleber & Berenbaum 2011). Tangney and Dearing (2002) report reliability scores ranging from .76 - .88 (shame), .70 - .83 (guilt), .66 - .80 (externalization), .60 - .77

(detachment), .41 - .72 (alpha pride), and .51 - .72 (beta pride) that were collected over three trials with college student and adult participants. Other researchers found similar results (see Table 3 for a review) except for Rusch et al (2007) who suggest that cultural differences in the German and Swedish participants affected the guilt scale.

Table 3

Reported Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Scores for the TOSCA-3

Study	Shame	Guilt
Baldwin, Baldwin, & Ewald (2006)	$\alpha = .72$	$\alpha = .74$
Giner-Sorolla, Piazza, & Espinosa (2011)	$\alpha = .78$	$\alpha = .69$
Rizvi (2010)	$\alpha = .78$	$\alpha = .72$
Rusch et al. (2007)	$\alpha = .91$	$\alpha = .57$
Schoenleber & Berenbaum* (2010)	$\alpha = .77$	-
Schoenleber & Berenbaum (2011)	$\alpha = .77$	$\alpha = .70$

*Note: The Schoenleber & Berenbaum (2010) study only looked at shame.

The TOSCA-3 has a combination of five positive and 11 negative scenarios that yield the six subscales of guilt-proneness, shame-proneness, detachment, externalization, alpha pride and beta pride. Dropping all five positive scenarios (items 3, 6, 8, 11, and 14) creates a short version that is consistent with the long version ($\alpha = .94$ for shame and $\alpha = .93$ for guilt) and removes the Pride scales, which have the lowest reported reliability. These 16 scenarios have four different reactions scored individually with a Likert-type, 5-point scale that runs one (not likely) through five (highly likely) and summing the separate reactions creates the composite score for each subscale. Scores range from 11 to 55 on the short version and 16 to 80 on the long version

(Tangney et al., 2000). The instrument does not offer a normalized score nor do the authors of the instrument suggest any type of scoring rubric; however, other researchers reviewed (see Table 3) appear to use a low, moderate, or high proneness rubric based on mean scores observed. This study used the short version of the TOSCA-3 and considered mean scores between 11 and 25 as minimal/low proneness, mean scores between 26 and 40 as moderate proneness, and mean score between 41 and 55 as high proneness.

Modifications for the study. There are several reasons the TOSCA-3 short version is used. First, Tangney and Dearing (2002) report that the sample used to develop the TOSCA-3 included a high number of commuter and returning students also considered non-traditional students in the student literature. It seemed appropriate to use a measure created with feedback from non-traditional students to investigate a problem experienced by non-traditional students. Second, though often presented as a criticism (Ferguson & Crowley, 1997; Luyten, et al., 2002), the TOSCA-3 focuses on adaptive guilt, which predicts behaviors used to repair relationships (Giner-Sorolla, et al., 2011). Since one of the behaviors of interest is student withdrawal from classes, this suggests the TOSCA-3 might be able to predict which students are at the greatest risk for dropping out.

Finally, the TOSCA-3 is easily adapted for use with different populations (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). The scenarios used in the TOSCA-3 are very simple, everyday situations an individual might encounter. The commonplace nature of the scenarios allows for easy modification of words to make the scenarios more applicable to different ages or types of participants. Permission to modify the TOSCA-3 for use with non-traditional students came from the primary author of the instrument (see Appendix D).

Modifications to the TOSCA-3 to create the Non-Traditional Student Version (TOSCA-3: NTSV) included changing words or altering scenarios to more closely resemble the experiences of non-traditional students. For example, the TOSCA-3 item written as “You break something at work and then hide it” became “You borrow a calculator from a fellow classmate and break it; you then try to hide it from your friend.” Substituting words such as *child*, *partner/spouse*, and *family* for words such as *coworker* and *friend*, altered scenarios to more readily identify parenting and relational roles. Based on the defining characteristics of non-traditional students, four distinct categories of non-traditional student emerged and each category received a modified version representative of that experience (see Appendix C). The categories identified were Single Student No Children (SSNC), Married/Partnered No Children (MPNC), Single Student with Children (SSWC), and Married/Partnered with Children (MPWC). These versions scored the same as the TOSCA-3, Short Version with a range of 11 to 55 for each subscale.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The primary questions of interest regard non-traditional students’ emotional experience of guilt and the impact this experience may have on their behavior. Specifically, this study seeks to determine:

- To what extent are non-traditional students in general prone to feelings of guilt?
 - H₀: Non-traditional students have a low proneness to experience feelings of guilt.
 - H₁: Non-traditional students have a high proneness to feelings of guilt.

- What influence do the demographic factors of non-traditional students exert on the experience of guilt?
 - H_0 : There will be no statistically significant differences between class levels of non-traditional students on guilt-proneness scores.
 - H_1 : Freshman and first year graduate non-traditional students will score higher on guilt-proneness than other class levels.
 - H_{2_0} : There will be no statistically significant differences between enrollment types for non-traditional students on guilt-proneness scores.
 - H_{2_1} : Undergraduate non-traditional students will report higher guilt-proneness scores than graduate level non-traditional students.
 - H_{3_0} : There will be no statistically significant differences between genders on guilt-proneness scores.
 - H_{3_1} : Female non-traditional students will report higher guilt-proneness scores than male non-traditional students.
 - H_{4_0} : There will be no statistically significant differences on guilt-proneness scores between levels of non-traditional students.
 - H_{4_1} : Highly non-traditional students will report the higher guilt-proneness scores than minimally or moderately non-traditional students.
 - H_{5_0} : Marital status will have no statistically significant impact on guilt-proneness scores among non-traditional students.

- H5₁: Married non-traditional students will report higher guilt-proneness scores.
- H6₀: Parenting status will have no statistically significant impact on guilt-proneness scores.
- H6₁: Students parents will report higher guilt-proneness scores than non-traditional students without children.

Variables

The dependent variables in this study are the guilt-proneness scores obtained from the TOSCA-3 and TOSCA-3 NTSV. Independent variables of interest are class level, enrollment type, gender, level of non-traditional, marital status and parenting status. Class level is defined as the categories of freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, first year graduate, second year graduate, third year graduate, and professional. Enrollment type designates undergraduate and graduate. Gender defines the student as either male or female. Level of non-traditional student refers to the minimal, moderately, or highly non-traditional classifications identified earlier in the text that are based on the number of non-traditional student characteristics an individual reports. Marital status represents the married/partnered, widowed, divorced, or single relational status of the student. Finally, parenting status simply distinguishes those students who are parents and those who are not.

Data Analysis

The demographic section of the survey provided nominal and ordinal data best reported as ranks, percentages, or proportions. Comparisons with current literature revealed both

similarities and differences between and across groups based on gender, class level, enrollment type, parent status, and relationship status. The TOSCA-3 and Non-Traditional Student Version returned mean scores for comparison and analysis based on gender, class level, and category of non-traditional student. Independent sample t-tests provided evaluation of relationships between test scores and gender, parenting status, employment, first generation student, enrollment type, attendance type, and fear of dropout. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) identified relationships between test scores and level non-traditional, relationship status, class level, age, ethnicity, number of children, yearly income, loan debt, commuter status, level of perceived support, and total number of non-traditional characteristics; and post hoc evaluation relied on Tukey's test. The study used SPSS 20.0 and Microsoft Office Excel 2007 to conduct data analysis.

Summary

Information collected as part of this study will be used to create a current demographic picture of non-traditional students overall. It will also help to identify the top challenges that non-traditional students face, inform best practice and advocacy for non-traditional students, and explore the experience of guilt in non-traditional students' experiences that may influence dropout rates. Such information fills current gaps in the existing literature and helps to inform future policy and procedures that will enable non-traditional students and universities to meet the goals set forth by federal and state policies. This chapter contains an introduction to the research questions, an outline of the procedures used to identify participants and conduct the study, a description of the instruments used to collect data, and an explanation of the data analysis methods used. The next chapter contains a discussion of the results of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Much of the research that exists regarding non-traditional students focuses on how the population is different from the traditional student population (Huff & Thorpe, 1997; Senter & Senter, 1998; Springer, et al., 2009), the barriers and challenges the population faces (Bauman, et al., 2004; Bowl, 2001; Keith, 2007; Milheim, 2005), and on the high attrition rates in the population (Austin, 2006; Bamber & Tett, 2000; Cavote & Kopera-Frye, 2006; Naretto, 1995). Although the research mentions the psychological strain this population experiences (Chao & Good, 2004; Christie, et al., 2008; Giancola, et al., 2009; Kasworm, 2008; Quimby & O'Brien, 2006), no studies were found that attempted to assess specific emotions in the population as this study does. Additionally, many of the studies reporting demographic data report data collected in the late 1980s or early 1990s (Choy, 2002; Horn & Carroll, 1996; Horn & Carroll, 1998; Pusser, et al., 2007). Two exceptions to this used national postsecondary graduation reports from 1998 (Milam, 2009) or financial aid reports from 2003 (Perna, et al., 2010) to create a more current picture of the population. This study attempts to fill these gaps in the literature. The previous section described the study participants, procedures, collection methods, and data analysis. This section describes the results found.

Demographic Data

A primary goal for this study is the identification of the non-traditional student population. Specifically, how has this population changed if at all in the past 20 years? Has the increase in female students and single parents continued, slowed, or reversed? Is there a common characteristic that identifies all non-traditional students? Do the currently used

characteristics still apply to the population or have some of them become obsolete? Should new characteristics be included in the definition of non-traditional students? This study explored these questions through the demographic segment of the survey (see Appendix C).

Institutional Characteristics

Previous literature suggested that non-traditional students predominantly attended 2-year institutions (Choy, 2002; Diel-Amen, 2005; Pusser et al., 2007). In the current study, only three participants (n=152) attended 2-year schools. However, Horn and Carroll (1998) point out that non-traditional students transfer from institution to institution more frequently than traditional students do, which Milam (2009) reported as the transition from 2-year schools to 4-year schools. This study did not explore the transfer status of participants, but transfers might explain the higher number of non-traditional students now attending 4-year schools. An alternative explanation for this shift is that two-year schools may simply be under-represented in this sample. Two participants also reported attending an online school and one reported attending a technical or trade school. The remaining participants (n=145) attended 4-year institutions with 134 attending public schools and 11 attending private schools.

Participants reported being identified as non-traditional students (n = 88), commuter/off-campus students (n = 19), and adult students (n = 9) at their universities. However, 20% of the participants (n = 29) had no idea what the school identified them as and some students reported that they were identified as simply adult returning students (n = 2), Veteran students (n = 2), or graduate students (n = 2) at their schools. Schools had enrollments ranging from less than 5,000 (n = 7) to over 35,000 (n = 10) with 42.1% (n = 64) having enrollments between 15,000 and 25,000, and several participants (27%, n = 41) did not know enrollment numbers for their school.

Although 19 participants (12.5%) did not know of any services offered at their university, other participants were able to identify minimal (1-3) support services (n = 22) or moderate (4-5) support services (n = 29), and 53.9% (n = 82) reported six or more support services available to them. Many participants did not respond to the question about what state they live in (n=49 or 32.2%). Of the participants who did report the state they reside in, the majority (n = 80) live in the Central part of the United States (Illinois = 73, Minnesota = 2, Texas = 2, Wisconsin = 3). Participants also reported living in the Southeast (Florida = 1, Georgia = 2, North Carolina = 8), the Northeast (Kentucky = 2, Maryland = 1, Michigan = 5, Ohio = 1, Pennsylvania = 2), and the Northwest (Wyoming = 1).

Student Characteristics

In considering non-traditional students' educational goals, previous research indicated non-traditional students tend to seek no degree at all, seek a vocational certificate, or seek an associate degree (Compton, et al., 2006; Horn & Carroll, 1996; Milam, 2009). In the current study, only three participants reported such goals. The majority of participants (n = 80) reported seeking a bachelor's degree and the remaining 69 participants reported seeking master's degree (n = 41) or doctorate degree (n = 28), which again may indicate a shift in the population. Over half (56%) of the participants were undergraduates (freshman = 1, sophomore = 3, Junior = 15, Senior = 65), 44% were graduates, and two respondents reported no class level at all. Although much of the literature reviewed indicated a higher likelihood for non-traditional students to attend class part-time (Choy, 2002; Horn & Carroll, 1996; Milam, 2009; Perna, et al., 2010), this study found that 77.6% of participants attend classes full-time. The majority (93.4%) take classes on campus, 32.2% take classes online, and 6.6% use distance learning to complete course work. Finally, 68.4% of participants report preferring to take classes during the day.

Almost all the participants (93.4%, $n = 142$) reported commuting. For 21% of participants, the commute lasted longer than an hour, but 63.2% have a commute of 30 minutes or less. For two commuters, the commute only occurred once or twice in a semester, some commuted only on weekends ($n = 2$), but most (40.1%, $n = 61$) commuted every day. Along with commuting, 73.7% of participants reported working ($n = 112$) and 66.9% worked over 20 hours per week, which previous research found increased the potential for drop out (Choy, 2002; Horn & Carroll, 1996; Keith, 2007). Despite working, over half of the participants ($n = 79$) reported annual income below \$25,000 per year (52.32%). Additionally, over half (51%, $n = 75$) of respondents reported borrowing up to \$25,000 to pay for their education, 28.6% ($n = 42$) borrowed between \$25,000 and \$50,000 to pay for their education, 22 participants borrowed between \$50,000 and \$100,000, and 8 participants have borrowed over \$100,000 to pay for their education.

This level of annual income is especially concerning considering that 53.3% ($n = 81$) of participants reported being parents (see Table 4). Among those respondents identifying as parents, 24 reported being single/separated/divorced with 1 to 5 children each, and 30 parents reported incomes less than \$20,000 per year, an amount that places them living at or below the poverty levels established by the Department of Human Services (2011). Perna, Fester, and Walsh (2010) reported that student parents make up 25% of the undergraduate student population. However, undergraduate parents ($n = 44$) in this sample represented 28.9% while graduate student parents ($n = 37$) represent 24.3%. Participants reported child ages from newborn ($n = 4$) to over 25 years of age ($n = 6$) with the most frequently reported age range being 13 – 15 years of age ($n = 21$). In addition to providing care for children ($n = 160$, $M =$

1.97), participants also reported care giving responsibilities for elderly parents (9.9%, n=15) and one participant reported providing care for a disabled or mentally handicapped relative.

Table 4

Parenting Status and Number of Children by Income Level

Income	Parents	Children [*]
Under \$10,000	13	23
\$10,000- \$15,000	12	17
\$15,001- \$20,000	5	6
\$20,001-\$25,000	10	19
\$25,001-\$30,000	7	14
\$30,001-\$35,000	4	7
\$35,001-\$40,000	8	21
\$40,001-\$45,000	2	11
\$45,001-\$50,000	6	11
\$50,001-\$55,000	2	2
\$55,001-\$60,000	-	-
Over \$60,000	12	29

Note: Parents' (n = 81) marital status is single (n = 7), engaged (n = 4), co-habiting (n = 4), domestic partnership (n = 5), married (n = 44), separated (n = 2), and divorced (n = 15).

* The number of children reported by parents per income level

One-third (33.6%) of participants reported being the first member of their family to attend college (n = 51). The majority reported having a high school diploma (n = 133), and 18 participants report having a GED. Military service was reported by 28 participants (18.4%) with the most frequently listed branch being the Army (n = 10) followed by the Air Force (n = 5) and the Navy (n = 4). Participants also reported between 2 and 26 years of military service (M = 11.29). Nearly all participants (n = 145) were considered financially independent students by their institutions meaning they were not claimed as a dependent on another's federal income taxes.

Another characteristic shared by nearly all the participants is having a gap in their education (n = 141). Participants reported having between one and six gaps in their education (M = 1.82) that lasted from 4 months to 35 years (M = 6.99). Some students were unable to recall how many times they had “stopped out” and so simply used terms such as *many*, *multiple*, and *several*. Most participants reported stopping out during their undergraduate years (n = 68), several reported taking a break between undergraduate and graduate classes (n = 46), and 21 students stepped out during their graduate courses. A large number (n = 60) of participants reported being in the delayed entry category of non-traditional student, which means having a gap between leaving high school and entering college. It is interesting to note that many studies on stop out and drop out such as the one by Horn and Carroll (1998) conduct follow up or longitudinal reviews at 3 and 5 years, which, considering the average gap reported here, might explain the high attrition rates reported for this population.

In order to explore non-traditional students’ concerns about both dropping out and stopping out, participants listed some of the challenges they faced and then reported if they had ever feared these challenges might prevent them from graduating. Over half the participants (58%, n = 87) reported fearing that the challenges they face as non-traditional students might prevent them from obtaining their degree goals. As mentioned previously, the perceived lack of support heightened this fear and may increase the likelihood of dropping out (Chao & Good, 2004; Christie, et al., 2008; Naretto, 1995). To explore this possibility further, this study asked participants to identify the members of their support group. Although 13 participants reported having no one in their support network, most students reported having family (n = 129), friends (n = 114), other non-traditional students (n = 52), university staff (n = 48), and coworkers (n = 46) in their support network. Several participants listed multiple support people in their network

($M = 2.5$, range 0-6); however, simply having this support network did not seem to reduce the fear that the challenges participants face as non-traditional students might keep them from graduating as 54% of participants reporting this fear also indicated having a moderate (2 to 3 member) level of support ($n = 47$).

Assessment Results

At the end of the demographic section, participants identified the category of non-traditional student that best fit their situation. Most participants ($n = 63$, 41.4%) identified as married/partnered with children (MPWC), with 32 participants (21.1%) identifying as a single student no children (SSNC), 30 (19.7%) as single student with children (SSWC), and 27 as married/partnered no children (MPNC). Section two of the survey contained the Non-Traditional Student Version of the TOSCA-3 short version that corresponded to the categories of non-traditional student listed above. Of the total sample ($n = 152$), 123 participants completed a modified version of the TOSCA-3, and 101 went on to complete the TOSCA-3 short version in section 3 of the survey. Moderate to strong correlations existed between the versions of the instrument for all subscales except for Externalization and Detachment (see Table 5) suggesting acceptable concurrent validity in the subscale of interest.

Table 5

Pearson's Correlation Results: Non-Traditional Student Version to TOSCA-3 Short Version

	Single Student No Children	Married/Partnered No Children	Single Student With Children	Married/Partnered With Children
Shame	.947**	.930**	.760**	.775**
Guilt	.780**	.747**	.836**	.832**
Externalization	.946**	.760**	.490*	.794**
Detachment	.863**	.841**	.691**	.824**

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

Tangney and Dearing (2002) reported different mean scores on the TOSCA-3 based on gender. Similar differences and comparable mean scores existed between the Non-Traditional Student Version and the TOSCA-3 used for this study (see Table 6). ANOVA results indicated no statistically significant differences between scores on the Non-Traditional Student Versions and gender, level of non-traditional or parenting status. However, differences in guilt and relationship status $F(3, 48) = 3.53, p = .022$, detachment and class level $F(5, 19) = 3.54, p = .020$, and shame and enrollment type $F(1, 22) = 5.15, p = .033$ existed for the Married/Partnered categories. The TOSCA-3 short version revealed significant differences in guilt $F(1, 104) = 11.01, p = .001$ and shame $F(1, 105) = 5.49, p = .021$ based on gender and guilt $F(5, 51) = 3.68, p = .006$ based on the number of children reported.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations for Non-Traditional Student Version and TOSCA-3 Short Version

Subscale Instrument	M	Male SD	N	M	Female SD	N
Shame						
TOSCA-3	21.29	7.86	27	25.99	9.33	80
NTSV-SSNC	23.55	6.29	9	29.00	9.36	19
NTSV-MPNC	19.77	6.63	9	26.87	11.87	15
NTSV-SSWC	14.00	-	1	21.17	7.17	23
NTSV-MPWC	20.94	7.35	16	23.08	7.281	37
Guilt						
TOSCA-3	43.48	9.27	27	48.72	6.19	79
NTSV-SSNC	46.00	5.42	10	48.79	4.77	19
NTSV-MPNC	42.44	5.66	9	47.07	5.27	15
NTSV-SSWC	41.00	-	1	45.96	5.63	25
NTSV-MPWC	43.63	6.99	16	46.67	5.62	36
Externalization*						
TOSCA-3	23.65	7.80	26	21.57	6.36	81
NTSV-SSNC	22.00	7.38	10	22.28	5.99	18
NTSV-MPNC	23.89	9.41	9	19.81	6.11	16
NTSV-SSWC	28.00	-	1	22.04	5.09	24
NTSV-MPWC	24.88	5.75	16	24.41	6.63	37

Table 6 (continued)

Detachment**						
TOSCA-3	31.33	9.80	27	27.69	8.41	81
NTSV-SSNC	29.80	7.57	10	25.63	8.02	19
NTSV-MPNC	32.89	6.43	9	29.19	6.72	16
NTSV-SSWC	37.00	-	1	26.46	6.21	24
NTSV-MPWC	29.31	8.02	16	30.39	5.96	36

Note: * Men generally reported higher externalization scores but differences in score means are not statistically significant.

** Men also reported higher scores on detachment but again differences were not statistically significant.

Research Question1

The first question of interest in the study relates to the general guilt-proneness of this population. As described earlier, the TOSCA-3 is not a normalized instrument and it does not offer a scoring rubric to clarify the level of guilt/shame proneness identified by the mean score recorded; however, review of other research (see Table 3) indicates the use of a low/minimal, moderate, and high categorization of proneness based on mean scores. Following this example, mean scores ranging from 11 to 25 suggested minimal/low guilt-proneness, scores ranging from 26 to 40 suggested moderate guilt-proneness, and scores ranging from 41 to 55 suggested high guilt-proneness in this study. Given the mean scores for guilt observed in this study (see Table 6) it would appear that non-traditional students are highly guilt prone. These results support the alternative hypothesis.

Although no statistically significant differences existed, TOSCA-3 guilt scores showed a tendency to increase based on age with a drop noted at 41 – 45 years and again at 56 – 60 years old. This pattern repeated on the Non-Traditional Student-SSNC version but showed greater variability across the other categories in relation to age. Single students without children reported the highest overall guilt-proneness scores across age groups ($M = 47.83$, $SD = 5.09$,

scale 11 – 55, range 44.00 – 52.00), then single students with children ($M = 45.77$, $SD = 5.60$, scale 11 – 55, range 42.00 – 55.00), married/partnered students with children ($M = 45.73$, $SD = 6.17$, scale 11 – 55, range 37.00 – 49.44), and finally married/partnered students without children ($M = 45.33$, $SD = 5.77$, scale 11 – 55, range 41.0 – 49.40). The overall mean guilt by age score for the TOSCA-3 was 47.39 ($SD = 7.42$, scale 11 – 55, range 43.55 – 55.00).

Guilt scores also appear to vary across ethnic groups but this difference is not statistically significant. Mean scores on the TOSCA-3 (scale 11 – 55, range 47.00 – 52.00) were 47.00 (2.92) for biracial participants ($n = 5$), 47.05 (7.69) for Caucasian participants ($n = 81$), 47.50 (9.19) for multiracial participants ($n = 2$), 49.77 (7.69) for African American participants ($n = 13$), and 52.00 for Hispanic participants ($n = 1$). The lowest guilt scores reported across all income levels was on the NTSV-MPWC modification ($M = 33.33$, $SD = 4.73$, scale 11 – 55, $n = 3$) at the \$15,001 to \$20,000 income level; the TOSCA-3 score for this income level was also the lowest score reported ($M = 41.75$, $SD = 11.89$, scale 11 – 55, $n = 8$). This particular result is difficult to interpret because no clear pattern is evident in the scores reported; however ANOVA testing indicates it is significant $F(10,41) = 2.417$, $p = .023$ for the married/partnered with children group.

Analysis revealed two additional significant differences for the married/partnered student group. First, married or partnered students with children who reported fearing that the challenges they face as non-traditional students would prevent them from completing their degree also reported higher guilt-proneness scores ($n = 34$, $M = 47.03$, $SD = 5.63$, scale 11 – 55) than any group except the single students with no children ($n = 14$, $M = 48.79$, $SD = 4.59$, scale 11 – 55). The difference between fearing being able to complete or not was only statistically significant for the married/partnered students $F(1, 50) = 4.66$, $p = .036$ and indicated that those

who are married/partnered without children experience significantly less guilt-proneness ($M = 43.28$, scale $11 = 55$, range $43.28 - 47.03$) than other categories of non-traditional students. This seems to suggest that childrearing challenges increased both the fear of completing degree goals and guilt for this segment of the non-traditional student population.

The second significant finding related to the married/partnered category of non-traditional students concerned level of support. The level of support was determined by the number of people participants reported in their support network, and ranged from none (0) to high (6 or more). Analysis of variance also revealed a significant difference between groups in relation to the level of support and guilt $F(2, 49) = 3.86$, $p = .028$, which was found in the married/partnered with children group. This difference is between participants reporting a moderate level of support ($M = 43.05$, $SD = 6.61$, scale $11 - 55$, range $43.05 - 47.95$, $n = 21$) and those reporting a high level of support ($M = 47.95$, $SD = 5.49$, scale $11 - 55$, range 43.05 to 47.95 , $n = 21$). The findings suggest that the larger the support network, the higher the guilt participants experienced.

Research Question 2

One research question explored the general experience of guilt in the non-traditional student population. Recognizing the possibility of this emotional experience led to questions regarding how certain non-traditional student factors affected the experience of guilt. Specifically, when is guilt highest, how does gender affect guilt scores, and how does marriage or parenting affect guilt? Additionally, are highly non-traditional students more prone to experiencing guilt than minimally or moderately non-traditional students?

Guilt and Class Level. Guilt scores revealed an interesting pattern when examined by class level. TOSCA-3 scores were highest for freshmen ($M = 52.00$, scale 11 – 55, $n = 1$), dropped to a low ($M = 45.89$, $SD = 6.17$, scale 11 – 55, $n = 9$) for juniors, spiked for seniors ($M = 48.27$, $SD = 7.35$, scale 11 – 55, $n = 45$), dropped again from first year graduate students ($M = 47.60$, $SD = 4.28$, scale 11 – 55, $n = 5$) to third year graduate students ($M = 44.55$, $SD = 9.79$, scale 11 – 55, $n = 11$) and then spiked again at the doctoral level ($M = 47.50$, $SD = 8.52$, scale 11 – 55, $n = 20$). Because variance between the groups was not significant, the study failed to reject the null hypothesis of no difference across class levels. Although the alternative hypothesis suggested that freshman and first year graduate students would report the highest guilt scores, the spike in doctoral level students was not expected.

Guilt and Enrollment Type. Following closely with class level is enrollment type (undergraduate or graduate). Although TOSCA-3 scores were slightly higher for undergraduates ($M = 48.05$, $SD = 7.04$, scale 11 – 55, $n = 57$) than graduates ($M = 46.61$, $SD = 7.83$, scale 11 – 55, $n = 49$), this did not represent a statistically significant difference. These findings support the null hypothesis. An interesting but also statistically insignificant observation is that graduate single students without children reported the highest overall guilt scores across all groups on the TOSCA-3:NTSV ($M = 48.64$, $SD = 4.18$, scale 11 - 55, range 44.25 - 48.64, $n = 11$).

Guilt and Gender. Similar to previous research with the TOSCA- 3 (Tangney & Dearing, 2002), women in this study reported higher scores on both guilt and shame, and lower scores on detachment and externalization (see Table 6). Analysis using an independent *t*-test indicated significant differences of guilt-proneness between genders on the TOSCA-3, $t(104) = -3.32$, $p = .001$, $CI [-9.13 - -1.35]$, but no significant differences were identified on any of the Non-Traditional Student Versions (NTSV). Further analysis using Analysis of Variance

(ANOVA) tests revealed significant differences on the TOSCA-3 for guilt $F(1,104) = 11.01, p = .001$ and shame $F(1,105) = 5.49, p = .021$ for female participants. Based on these findings, the study rejects the null hypothesis because female non-traditional students do appear to experience more guilt and shame proneness than their male peers do.

Guilt and Level of Non-Traditional Student. Although no statistically significant differences existed between groups, some interesting patterns emerged. First, moderately non-traditional students reported the highest guilt scores on the TOSCA-3 ($M = 47.94, SD = 6.36$, scale 11 - 55, range 45.75 - 47.93, $n = 16$). Single students without children ($n = 29$) reported higher guilt scores across all categories and levels of non-traditional students on the TOSCA-3: NTSV ($M = 47.83, SD = 5.09$, scale 11-55, range 47.00 - 48.06). One noted exception to these findings on the TOSCA-3: NTSV was the married/partnered without children category, which reported higher TOSCA-3: NTSV guilt scores at the moderate level of non-traditional ($M = 48.40, SD = 6.77, n = 5$, scale 11- 55). The alternative hypothesis suggested that if the results failed to support the null hypothesis, scores would be highest for highly non-traditional students. This was supported only for the single students as the married/partnered students reported higher guilt scores at a moderate level of non-traditional characteristics.

Guilt and Marital Status. It appears that marital status has an impact on guilt scores. A significant difference was found using ANOVA for the married/partnered student with children modification $F(3, 48) = 3.53, p = .022$. Post hoc analysis with Tukey's Test revealed a significant difference at $p = .05$ level between married and domestic partners with those participants in a domestic partnership reporting the lowest TOSCA-3: NTSV scores ($M = 38.83, SD = 6.59, n = 6$, scale 11- 55). Married participants reported the highest TOSCA-3: NTSV guilt scores ($M = 46.85, SD = 5.19, n = 40$, scale 11 - 55), cohabitating participants reported the

second highest TOSCA-3: NTSV scores ($M = 46.67$, $SD = 10.41$, $n = 3$, scale 11 - 55), and engaged participants reported guilt-proneness scores of ($M = 43.67$, $SD = 7.23$, $n = 3$, scale 11 - 55).

Guilt and Parenting Status. Guilt scores did not vary significantly based on parenting status. However, some interesting patterns in guilt scores emerged. Married students with children reported higher TOSCA-3: NTSV guilt scores ($M = 45.80$, $SD = 5.79$, scale 11 - 55, $n = 44$) than single students with children ($M = 45.32$, $SD = 5.59$, scale 11 - 55, $n = 22$). Participants who reported children living with them reported higher guilt scores on the TOSCA-3 ($M = 47.84$, $SD = 7.33$, scale 11 - 55, $n = 57$) than those who did not ($M = 46.86$, $SD = 7.55$, scale 11 - 55, $n = 49$). This finding seems to suggest that parents may feel more guilt than non-parents may. However, two participants who categorized themselves as not having children reported that they have children that live with them and these two participants reported the highest scores for single students ($M = 50.00$) and for married/partnered students ($M = 46.00$).

Summary

This section contained the report of the data analysis. Though few significant results were found related to the research questions, interesting trends were observed that suggest possible relationships that this sample was simply too small to illuminate. Significant relationships exist between guilt and gender, and guilt and marital status. Guilt-proneness scores of married/partnered students with children revealed relationships between guilt and the fear that challenges faced as a non-traditional student would prevent degree completion, and between guilt and the student's perceived level of support. In the next section are a more detailed

discussion of these results, a list of limitations of the study, suggested areas of future research, and a brief discussion of the implications for practitioners working with this population.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Despite rapid growth over the past forty years, the non-traditional student population remains elusive. Reliance on outdated demographic data and failure to explore the emotional experiences of these students leaves large gaps not only in the current literature, but also in the understanding of what motivates these students to complete the degrees they start or not. Additional failure to empirically test the models of attrition developed to understand this population better only widens the gap in the understanding of what services might truly benefit this population. This study creates a more current demographic picture of the population and explores guilt-proneness to understand this population better.

Demographic Shifts

The results presented in the previous section in some ways supported past research findings but also suggest some possible shifts in the current population. For example, previous research suggested that non-traditional students were concentrated in 2-year schools (Horn & Carroll, 1996) seeking certificates or associates degrees on a part-time basis (Choy, 2002; Milam, 2009) if they desired a degree at all (Compton, et al, 2006). This study did not support this image of the non-traditional student and in fact, found quite the opposite. It is believed that this shift from 2-year to 4-year institutions and away from certificates and associate degrees results from the prediction made by the United States Department of Labor (1999) regarding the future need for employees with higher education levels. Considering that much of the previous research draws on longitudinal data collected over the 1980's and 1990's (Choy, 2002; Horn &

Carroll, 1996) to describe this population, such a shift represents a normative change in the population as expected over time.

This shift does not explain why non-traditional students have shifted from part time attendance to full time attendance. One explanation for this shift comes from the limitations placed on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits that require the student to work or attend class in order to maintain benefits. Because these limitations allow for only two-years of course work, students must increase course loads in order to complete degrees as quickly as possible (Bone, 2010; Christopher, 2009; Lower-Basch, 2010). An additional explanation for this shift resides in the federal and state use of matriculation rates for university funding purposes that encourage university policies that push students through the system as quickly as possible (Cavote, Kopera-Frye, 2006; Tinto, 2006). However, these policies create rigid programs that do not tolerate the flexibility needed by non-traditional students to achieve their educational goals and therefore encourage stop-outs and dropouts in this population (Pusser et al., 2007).

Another potential shift identified through this study is the increasing number of student parents. Horn and Carroll (1996) reported that attendance rates of student parents dropped from 22% in 1989 to 20 % in 1992, Johnson et al (2009) found the rate to be 23% in 2009, and Perna, Fester, and Walsh (2010) reported the number of student parents at 25%. Senter and Senter (1998) reported the rate of student parents at 56.2% at a public Midwestern university, but pointed out that the study had a high proportion of off-campus/commuter students and a high percentage of female students that made the sample unlikely to be representative of the population in general. Like the Senter and Senter (1998) study, participants in this study are also predominately female and represent a large percentage of commuters.

There are two important things to note about Perna, Fester, and Walsh's (2010) study. First, their study relied on national financial aid reports from 2003-2004 to identify the population; since the data drew on a nationally representative sample of students, it seems reasonable to expect the percentage of student parents to be close to the 25% they identified. Second, the authors also limited the data analysis in their study to undergraduates only even though graduate student information was available. This study includes graduate students. Considering this difference, graduate student parents ($n = 37$, 24.3%) were removed from the calculation revealing that undergraduate student parents ($n = 44$) make up 28.9% of the sample, which is a smaller but more likely growth in the student parent population.

Research Questions

The study supports the alternative hypothesis that non-traditional students are highly guilt-prone. High guilt-proneness scores on the TOSCA-3 short version and the Non-Traditional Student Versions of the TOSCA-3 (see Table 6) supported this. Additionally, participants listed *guilt* as both a challenge they have faced and an emotion they have experienced. What is interesting about the finding is the group reporting the highest overall guilt-proneness score. Ecological Systems theory suggests that if non-traditional students were guilt-prone, this proneness would be highest for the married student parents and lowest for single students without children due to the number of mesosystem interactions (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Renn & Arnold, 2003). Married students would have the greatest number of microsystems and thus the greatest number of mesosystem interactions and single students without children would theoretically have the fewest. This study found that single students with no children reported the highest overall guilt-proneness scores ($M = 47.83$, $SD = 5.09$, range = 38.00 to 54.00, scale 11 to 55, $n = 29$) followed by single parents ($M = 45.77$, $SD = 5.60$, range 30.00 to 55.00, scale 11 to

55, $n = 26$), married/partnered parents ($M = 45.73$, $SD = 6.17$, range = 28.00 to 55.00, scale = 11 to 55, $n = 52$), and finally, married/partnered without children ($M = 45.33$, $SD = 5.77$, range = 33.00 to 54.00, scale = 11 to 55, $n = 24$).

One explanation for these findings is suggested by past guilt research showing distinct gender differences in the experience of guilt with females reporting higher scores on assessment instruments (Lewis, 1971; Tangney & Dearing 2002). Female participants ($n = 110$) make up 72.4% of the total sample, represent over half of the respondents per category, and scored higher than male participants on both shame and guilt-proneness scores across all Non-Traditional Student Versions and the TOSCA-3 short version (see Table 6). Women are also strongly encouraged to adhere to the social norms related to parenting and gender roles and may be more susceptible to social timing norms. Support for guilt based on violation of social norms comes from the comments made on the qualitative survey question regarding emotions related to conflict between school and home life that mentioned not being available to children and partners, attending school off time (later in life), and missing family activities. An important factor to remember is that social norm expectations do not exclude men. Society expects men to be the breadwinner for the family and to be independent. Failure to meet these societal expectations due to the demands of school can heighten the experience of guilt for both male and female students.

Another possible explanation for this result relates to the findings for married/partnered students. Married or partnered status may provide an ameliorating influence on guilt because the spouse or partner can serve as a surrogate for the student. For example, the student may feel disappointment for not attending a child's function, but they might not experience guilt because the spouse or partner was there to support the child. Married or partnered participants had lower

scores on the Non-Traditional Student Version of the TOSCA-3 with the lowest scores reported by those who were in a domestic partnership. This study does not consider guilt-proneness in the homosexual population and therefore can only speculate about the nature of this particular finding. This interesting and unexpected finding warrants further exploration.

Another unexpected finding is the relationship between guilt and class level. TOSCA-3 short version guilt-proneness scores were high for freshmen but steadily dropped across class levels reaching the lowest point for juniors. A spike in scores occurred for seniors but scores began to drop again with first year graduate students before spiking again for doctorate level participants. In general, undergraduate participants reported higher guilt-proneness scores than graduate students. The high score for freshmen is tied to the low sample size ($n=1$) and the higher scores among undergraduates may reflect the higher percentage of parents who would be violating the intensive mothering parenting norm as well as gender role norms.

The results indicated that, students at the transitional points of college life reported the highest guilt-proneness scores. Freshmen who are entering the world of college create a change in the family, marital and employment systems that throws the system out of balance. Then seniors who are about to complete degree requirements face the choice between continuing education and entering the work force, which again creates change in the family, marital, and employment systems. Finally, Doctoral students face entering the system of academia that places high demands on the student for time, performance, and dedication (Elliott, 2008; Springer, et al., 2009), which require changes to the family, marital, and employment systems yet again. Since a founding tenet of systems theory is that systems attempt to maintain homeostasis (White & Klein, 2002), changes made by one member of the system affect other members and, depending on the changing member's belief system, may cause feelings of guilt and anxiety

(Hall, 2003). Furthermore, non-traditional students are already dealing with a different set of developmental tasks that may heighten the experience of guilt due to the recognition that they are off time in some way such as being a parent before marriage or at an earlier age than expected (Chartrand, 1992; Slater, 2003; Whitbourne, et al., 2009).

Additional Findings

The data analysis provided two additional findings that are of interest because of the frequent mention of these issues in the literature. One is the issue of educational gaps; the other is the issue of perceived support. One of the characteristics used to define non-traditional students is having a gap in education. The literature identifies gaps occurring between high school and college as *delayed entry* gaps and those occurring during college as *stop-outs*. Stop-outs are of particular concern because the literature reports that frequent stop-outs lead to dropout (Horn & Carroll, 1998, Milam, 2009).

The literature states clearly that non-traditional students drop out at higher rates than traditional students (Choy, 2002; Milam, 2009). These dropouts often follow one or more stop-outs (Horn & Carroll, 1998). A confounding factor noted during the literature review regarding stop-outs versus dropouts is that follow up reviews to determine continued or renewed enrollment took place at three to five year intervals (Horn & Carroll, 1996; Milam, 2009). Although this study found a similar average number of gaps reported ($M = 1.82$) to earlier studies, the average gap reported in this study lasted 6.99 years; almost two years longer than the follow up review done by the previous research. This finding implies that dropout rates for this population may be erroneously inflated and graduation rates may be higher than reported. Milam (2009) also reported higher transfer rates for non-traditional students that explain the high

percentage of dropouts and the under-reporting of degree completion. It is also possible that non-traditional students drop out of school to care for children until those children are old enough to enter school themselves, which allows the parent to adhere to the intensive mothering ideology and gender role norms such as the breadwinner role expected of men.

Past research reveals the importance of a support network to non-traditional student success and highlights that support quality is more important than quantity (Bauman et al., 2004; Chao & Good, 2004; Christie et al., 2008; Naretto, 1995). The implication in the past research is that support can help the student succeed and reduces the psychological strain placed on the student by participating in the college experience. Although the quality of support received by non-traditional students from either the university or the support network was not explored, the quantity was and revealed interesting results. The results of this study reveal that the more services provided by the university and the larger the support network the student has, the higher the guilt-proneness scores reported. The implications of these findings are unclear at this time but the findings may reflect aspects of the quality of or type of support received that were not explored in this study. Further research into the types of support received by non-traditional students and the quality of that support may clarify this issue. Also, additional research with this population exploring their beliefs regarding the need for support and the emotional reactions to that need may prove enlightening.

Limitations to the study

There are several limitations to the study that warrant consideration when evaluating the results. First, the study does not have a large enough sample to obtain statistical power and therefore the results are limited to this sample. Second, participants may have responded to the

situations presented in ways believed to be more socially appropriate than those they might actually use. Tangney & Dearing (2002) point out the limitations to using any scenario-based measure include lower internal consistency rates, limited scenarios that depend on individual differences to elicit the desired emotional reaction, they expose the respondent's values or morals instead of true emotions, and they restrict responses to adaptive emotional reactions while excluding maladaptive responses. Such limitations provide only a partial picture of the individual's emotional traits. Finally, the length of the survey may have discouraged completion by participants considering many reported a lack of time to complete required tasks as a major challenge they have.

Implications for practice

Responses offered by participants for the open-ended question regarding their emotional experiences as non-traditional students reveal a need in this population for a variety of counseling services. Participants listed stress (n = 43), frustration (n = 31), anxiety/anger (n = 23), overwhelmed (n = 19), sad (n = 15), guilt/depression (n = 14), and fear (n = 12) as the emotions they experience. This suggests a need for individual counseling for stress, anxiety, depression, and anger. Many included comments about spouses/partners and children in relation to these emotions that suggest a need for couples and family counseling as well. Those who mentioned fear often included statements reflecting concerns about their ability to perform academically and to compete in the post-graduation job market. These comments suggest a need for workshops related to study skills and career counseling. Quimby and O'Brien (2006) suggested group therapy for this population and this suggestion is repeated here with the addition that groups be offered with the needs of commuter students in mind.

Participants listed several challenges. A few of these challenges are directly addressable by universities. One challenge frequently mentioned related to financial challenges. According to the Department of Education (2011), grant funding exists to assist universities with recruitment and retention issues related to those students identified as “having some college but no degree.” Universities can apply for these grants and use funds to provide services such as counseling, mentoring, and scholarships for tuition and child care.

Another challenge mentioned by participants relates to accessing the support, academic, and administrative services that are available to them already. Complaints included limited office hours; services not available when students are on campus and paperwork not accessible online. Universities can reduce these challenges by extending office hours one or two evenings a week, offering at least one half-day over the weekend per month, and posting required paperwork on the university website as a .pdf file that students can complete at home to either mail in or submit electronically. Additionally, participants mentioned challenges with scheduling classes, classes being available only on campus, and classes with stringent attendance policies. Universities may be able to relieve this challenge by offering more classes through distance learning, allowing students to join the class via computer web camera, and offering more general education courses as hybrid classes taught both on campus and online.

A final but disturbing challenge mentioned by participants relates to discrimination and stereotyping. Some participants felt they lost assistantships or scholarships because of their age or ethnicity. Others commented that professors and traditional students considered them limited because of age or parenting obligations. Still others commented that professors, teaching assistants, and traditional students ignore and dismiss the experience they bring to the classroom. These issues prevent non-traditional students from feeling welcome on campus or connected to

the university, which Tinto (1988) found encourages student drop out. Universities can overcome this by educating faculty, staff, and students about non-traditional students' needs through panel discussions, workshops, and presentations that include non-traditional students.

Implications for research

The study identified four areas that require further study. First, the study was exploratory in nature and designed to identify if non-traditional students are prone to experience guilt. Guilt-proneness scores reported by participants suggest that non-traditional students do indeed experience guilt and this guilt seems to be influenced by both relationship status and gender. However, it remains unclear from the current study which aspects of relational status and gender influence this experience. One hypothesis is that social norms and being off time on developmental tasks can explain this relationship. Future research in this area needs to focus on the impact of these influences on the non-traditional students' experience of guilt.

A second area of future research suggested by this study is the relationship between marital status and guilt especially in domestic partnerships. This group reported the lowest guilt-proneness scores. Understanding if this was an effect limited to this sample or indicative of the general population may help identify characteristics unique to the couples that were protective for them. Further research with domestic partners can also rule out a social desirability effect. Likewise, further research with married couples can identify specific social norms, values, and beliefs that may be heightening the experience of guilt for married non-traditional students.

A third area for future research suggested by this study relates to educational gaps. Past research has shown high dropout rates in the non-traditional population based on follow up studies at 3-year and 5-year intervals. However, participants in this study reported gaps, or stop-

outs, that lasted from four months to 35 years with an average gap of 6.99 years. Future research can identify the factors that encourage non-traditional students to stop-out, help redefine the term *dropout*, and identify alternative ways to measure the success of non-traditional students that do not rely on four to five year graduation rates.

Finally, future research can explore the connection between support and guilt. The results found here suggest the possible influence of social norms. However, results may relate to individual values related to self-sufficiency instead. Perhaps attitudes toward help-seeking are evident in the higher scores reported by those with the largest support networks and most university services available. The results recorded in this study do not provide enough information to suggest an explanation.

Conclusion

Although this study found that non-traditional students are guilt prone, only gender and marital status influenced this experience. Other non-traditional characteristics such as level of non-traditional, class level, enrollment type, and parenting status do not seem to have an effect on the guilt-proneness scores of this population. However, the small sample size limits these results. Full understanding of the guilt-proneness of non-traditional students and the factors that influence it requires additional exploration.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Request/Consent Email Letter

RE: Request for Participation

Dear fellow student,

My name is Kristian Alton and I am a graduate student at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. I am currently working to complete my Master degree in Counselor Education in the Marriage, Couples, and Family track there and I need your help. One of my interests is in the impact that pursuing higher education has on couples and families. As a student parent whether married, partnered, or single, you face greater stresses and challenges to completing your degree and I would like to understand your experiences better. To that end, I am seeking your participation in a research study being conducted as part of my thesis. Information collected will be used to help inform what the non-traditional student population “looks” like nationally, to identify emotional barriers to degree completion, and to inform best practice for helping non-traditional students succeed.

If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to complete a three-part survey online. The first part contains demographic information about you, your school, and your degree. The second and third sections of the survey will ask you to complete a brief assessment instrument. No personally identifiable information will be collected and your responses are both anonymous and confidential. The survey should take between 30 and 45 minutes to complete.

Completing the survey should cause you no discomfort or present a greater risk than you would experience in daily life. However, should you experience any undue stress as a result of participating in the survey, please contact myself or my thesis chair at the contact information below or seek assistance through your University’s Counseling Service Center. Participation in the survey is voluntary. You are not obligated to participate, and you will not be compensated for participating in any way. Again, to ensure anonymity, no personally identifiable information will be collected.

All responses will be identified by number and stored in a password-protected file. Responses will be kept for no longer than three months after the completion of the study, and results will be reported as group findings and aggregate scores. Because I am not collecting personally identifiable information (name, address, telephone, etc) and I am not tracking responses by email address, there should be no risk to or difficulty in maintaining confidentiality. All records will be kept private and secured in a password-protected file that only those directly involved with the research project or responsible for research oversight will have access to.

If you have any questions about this research study or your rights as a participant in it, please feel free to contact:

Kristian Alton

Dr. Muthoni Kimemia

Karen Rowland

405-338-8955

618-453-7110

618-453-4533

kalton@siu.edu

muthoni@siu.edu

orda@siu.edu

Should you experience any undue stress please contact me, my thesis chair or your local counseling services provider.

As previously mentioned, your participation is strictly voluntary. If at any time you decide to stop participating, you may simply exit out of the survey and your responses will not be used. There is no penalty for withdrawal, nor any obligation to participate. If you choose to participate, please print a copy of this letter for your records. Please understand that by clicking the link below, you are giving your consent to participate in the study and confirming that you understand you have the right to withdraw from participating at any time.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6CPCK99>

Appendix B

Reminder Second Request/Consent Email Letter

RE: Second Request for Participation

Dear fellow student,

My name is Kristian Alton and I am a graduate student at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. I am currently working to complete my Master degree in Counselor Education in the Marriage, Couples, and Family track there and I need your help. One of my interests is in the impact that pursuing higher education has on couples and families. As a student parent whether married, partnered, or single, you face greater stresses and challenges to completing your degree and I would like to understand your experiences better. To that end, I am seeking your participation in a research study being conducted as part of my thesis. Information collected will be used to help inform what the non-traditional student population “looks” like nationally, to identify emotional barriers to degree completion, and to inform best practice for helping non-traditional students succeed.

If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to complete a two-part survey online. The first part contains demographic information about you, your school, and your degree. The second section of the survey will ask you to briefly describe how you might or have felt in certain circumstances. No personally identifiable information will be collected and your responses are both anonymous and confidential. The survey should take between 30 and 45 minutes to complete.

Completing the survey should cause you no discomfort or present a greater risk than you would experience in daily life. However, should you experience any undue stress as a result of participating in the survey, please contact myself or my thesis chair at the contact information below or seek assistance through your University’s Counseling Service Center. Participation in the survey is voluntary. You are not obligated to participate, and you will not be compensated for participating in any way. Again, to ensure anonymity, no personally identifiable information will be collected.

All responses will be identified by number and stored in a password-protected file. Responses will be kept for no longer than three months after the completion of the study, and results will be reported as group findings and aggregate scores. Because I am not collecting personally identifiable information (name, address, telephone, etc) and I am not tracking responses by email address, there should be no risk to or difficulty in maintaining confidentiality. All records will be kept private and secured in a password-protected file that only those directly involved with the research project or responsible for research oversight will have access to.

If you have any questions about this research study or your rights as a participant in it, please feel free to contact:

Kristian Alton	Dr. Muthoni Kimemia	Karen Rowland
405-338-8955	618-453-7110	618-453-4533
kalton@siu.edu	muthoni@siu.edu	orda@siu.edu

Should you experience any undue stress please contact me, my thesis chair or your local counseling services provider.

As previously mentioned, your participation is strictly voluntary. If at any time you decide to stop participating, you may simply exit out of the survey and your responses will not be used. There is no penalty for withdrawal, nor any obligation to participate. If you choose to participate, please print a copy of this letter for your records. Please understand that by clicking the link below, you are giving your consent to participate in the study and confirming that you understand you have the right to withdraw from participating at any time.

Please be advised that the survey link will be active until September 25, 2011.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6CPCK99>

APPENDIX C

Section 1***Intro:***

A non-traditional student is one who has one or more of the following characteristics: (please check all that apply to you)

- | | | |
|--|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Is 25 years or older | Is partnered/married | Is separated/widowed/divorced |
| Is a parent | Delayed enrollment | Has gaps in education |
| Is employed full time | Is attending part-time | Has a GED |
| Is financially independent for Financial Aid | None of the above | |

(If they check “none of the above,” they will be thanked and exited from the survey, if any of the boxes are checked, then they go into the rest of the demographics section.)

Demographics:

1. For the purpose of this study, I am identifying students who have the characteristics listed in the previous question as "Non-Traditional Students." How does your school identify students like you?

I don't know a Non-Traditional Student an Adult Student a Commuter/off-campus student

2. What state do you live in? (drop-down menu)

3. What type of school do you attend?

2-year public	2-year private	4-year public	4-year private	Other: _____
Rural	Urban	Suburban	Online/Distance Education	

4. What type of degree are you seeking?

None	Certificate	Associates	Bachelor	Master/Professional	Doctorate
------	-------------	------------	----------	---------------------	-----------

5. How many students attend your school?

Under 5,000	5,000 – 10,000	10,000 – 15,000	15,000 – 20,000
20,000 – 25,000	25,000 – 30,000	30,000 – 35,000	Over 35,000

6. Which of the following services does your college/university offer? (check all that apply)

A Non-Traditional/Adult student office	A Non-Traditional/Adult student lounge
A Non-Traditional/Adult student group	Non-Traditional/Adult student advising

Family/Married Housing Tutoring Mentoring Program Newsletter
 Counseling/Support groups Child friendly computer labs/study rooms
 Extended office hours Non-Traditional/Adult Student Orientation
 Honor Society Membership Seminars/workshops Children's play area on campus
 Student Government Representation Academic Scholarships Childcare Scholarships
 Other services: _____ I don't know

7. Are you: Male Female Intersexed Transgendered Prefer not to answer

8. Please, indicate your age range below:

18-24 25-30 31-35 36-40 41-45 46-50 51-55 56-60 Over 60

9. Relationship status:

Partnered/Married Separated/Divorced Widowed Single Engaged/Cohabiting

10. Are you an International Student? Yes No

If yes, please indicate your home country. _____

11. Please, indicate your ethnicity:

African American Asian American Caucasian/White Hispanic

Native American/Pacific Islander Other: _____ Prefer not to answer

12. Do you provide the primary care for an elderly parent or other relative? Yes No

13. Are you the legal guardian for a disabled or mentally handicapped relative other than your own child? Yes No

14. Do you have children (birth/adoption/foster) who live with you? Yes No

(If they check yes, then ask the number and ages; if no then skip to next question.)

Indicate the number of children living with you by placing the number next to their age:

Newborn 1-2 3-4 5-6 7-9 10-12 13-15 16-17 18-22 22-24 25+

15. Are you employed? Yes (go to number of hours) No (skip to next question)

How many hours do you work per week on average?

Less than 10 11-15 16-20 21-25 26-30 31-35 36-40 Over 40

16. Income:

Sources: (check all that apply) Employment Child Support Disability

Veteran's Benefits Spouse/Partner Financial Aid Other: _____

Amount: Under \$10,000 \$10,000- \$15,000 \$15,001- \$20,000 \$20,001-\$25,000

 \$25,001-\$30,000 \$30,001-\$35,000 \$35,001-\$40,000 \$40,001-\$45,000

 \$45,001-\$50,000 \$50,001-\$55,000 \$55,001-\$60,000 Over \$60,000

17. How much have you had to borrow in student loans to pay for your education?

Under \$10,000 \$10,000- \$15,000 \$15,001- \$20,000 \$20,001-\$25,000

 \$25,001-\$30,000 \$30,001-\$35,000 \$35,001-\$40,000 \$40,001-\$45,000

 \$45,001-\$50,000 \$50,001-\$55,000 \$55,001-\$60,000 \$60,001-\$65,000

 \$65,001-\$70,000 \$70,001-\$75,000 \$75,001-\$80,000 \$80,001-\$85,000

 \$85,001-\$90,000 \$90,001-\$95,000 \$95,001-\$100,000 over \$100,000

18. Are you currently in the military or a Veteran? Yes No (skip to next question)

19. What Branch: Army Navy Air Force Marine Coast Guard National Guard

 National Guard Reserves ROTC

How many years did/have you served? _____

20. Are you the first in your family to attend college? Yes No

21. Which do you have: High School diploma GED Other

22. Are you considered independent for financial aid purposes?

23. Please, tell me about your coursework:

Class Level:

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior 1st Year Graduate/Professional

2nd Year Graduate/Professional 3rd Year Graduate/Professional Doctoral Student

24. How many hours do you take per semester on average?

3-6 7-9 10-12 13-15 16-18 Over 18

25. How do you take classes? (Check all that apply) Online On campus Distance Learning

26. Based on the number of hours you take per semester are you considered ___full-time or ___part-time?

27. When do you take classes? Days Evenings Weekends Other

28. Have you had gaps/breaks in your education? Yes No (if no, skip to the next question)

29. When was that gap? (check all that apply)

Between high school and college During Undergraduate

Between Undergraduate and graduate During Graduate

30. How many gaps/breaks have you had? _____

31. How long was the gap/break? _____

32. Do you commute?

No, I live in Campus housing. Yes, less than 5 miles Yes between 6 and 10 miles

Yes, 11-20 miles Yes, 20-30 miles Yes, 30-40 miles Yes, 40-50 miles

Yes, 50-60 miles Yes, 60-70 miles Yes, 70-80 miles Over 80 miles

33. How long does your commute take in hours/minutes? _____

How often do you commute? _____

34. Describe the greatest challenges you have faced as a non-traditional student. (text box)

Have you ever worried that these challenges might prevent you from completing your degree?
Yes No

What steps have you taken to overcome these challenges? (Text Box)

35. Who is in your support network? (check all that apply)

Family Friends Coworkers Other Non-Traditional Students University Staff

Others:_____ I don't have a support network (skip to next question)

How has your support network helped you succeed as a college student? (Text Box)

36. Please describe the things you have done to prevent your school work from interfering with your home life? (Text box)

What has been the most effective thing you have done to maintain balance in your life? (Text Box)

37. What are some of the emotions you have experienced as a result of conflict between school and your home life? (Text Box)

Please provide an example of a time where you felt this way and describe how you dealt with the feelings you had at that time? (Text Box)

38. How would you describe your college experience in general? (Text Box)

Section 2

Please select the category that best describes your situation:

Single/No Children
Single Parent

Partnered/Married without children
Partnered/Married with children

TOSCA-3

Non-Traditional Student Version Single Student/No Children

Below are situations that people are likely to encounter as a student, followed by several common reactions to those situations.

As you read each scenario, try to imagine yourself in that situation. Then indicate how likely you would be to react in each of the ways described. We ask you to rate all responses because people may feel or react more than one way to the same situation, or they may react different ways at different times.

For example:

A. You wake up early one Saturday morning. It is cold and rainy outside.

a) You would telephone a friend to catch up on news.

1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

b) You would take the extra time to read the paper.

1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

c) You would feel disappointed that it's raining.

1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

d) You would wonder why you woke up so early.

1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

In the above example, I've rated ALL of the answers by circling a number. I circled a "1" for answer (a) because I wouldn't want to wake up a friend very early on a Saturday morning -- so it's not at all likely that I would do that. I circled a "5" for answer (b) because I almost always read the paper if I have time in the morning (very likely). I circled a "3" for answer (c) because for me it's about half and half. Sometimes I would be disappointed about the rain and sometimes I wouldn't -- it would depend on what I had planned. And I circled a "4" for answer (d) because I would probably wonder why I had awakened so early.

Please do not skip any items -- rate all responses.

1. You've made plans to meet a friend for lunch after meeting with your classmates to discuss a group project. The discussion lasts longer than expected and you realize that you have missed lunch with your friend.

- a) You would think: "I'm inconsiderate." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "Well, they'll understand." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "I should make it up to them as soon as possible." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "Stupid group project!" 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

2. You borrow a calculator from a fellow classmate and break it. You then try to hide it from your friend.

- a) You would think: "This is making me anxious. I need to either fix it or replace it." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "I should quit school." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "A lot of things aren't made very well these days." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "It was only an accident." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

3. Because of a scheduling conflict at work, you have to wait until the last minute to begin a major class project, and it turns out badly.

- a) You would think: "I am incompetent." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "There are never enough hours in the day." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "I deserve to get a bad grade on the project." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "What's done is done." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

4. After pulling an all-nighter to complete a paper, you are so exhausted that you make a mistake at work. You later find out a co-worker is blamed for the error instead of you.

- a) You would think: "The company does not like my co-worker." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "Life is not fair." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "I should keep quiet and avoid my co-worker." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "This makes me feel unhappy and I should correct the situation quickly." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

5. While playing around during a study group, you throw a ball and it hits your tutor in the face.

- a) You would think: "I suck! I can't even throw a ball." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "My tutor needs to learn how to catch." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "It was just an accident." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "I should apologize and make he tutor is ok." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

6. You have agreed to meet your group at a classmates home to work on the project that is due in 3 days. You are running late and can't remember the house number so you text your classmate to get the address. As you are driving down the road, you hit a small animal.

- a) You would think: "That animal should not have been on the road." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "I'm terrible." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "Well, it was an accident." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "I feel bad. I should have been more alert while driving down the road." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

7. You walk out of an exam thinking you did extremely well despite going out with your classmates the night before. Then you find out you did poorly.

- a) You would think: "Well, it's just one test." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "The instructor doesn't like me because I have a life and they don't." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "I should have studied harder instead of going out." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "I am stupid." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

8. While out with a group of classmates, you make fun of a classmate who's not there.

- a) You would think: "It was all in fun; it's harmless." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "I'm a rat." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "They should have been here to defend themselves." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "I should apologize; that student has a lot of good qualities." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

9. You make a big mistake on an important group project for class. Your group members were depending on you, and your professor criticizes you.

- a) You would think: "The professor should have been more clear about what was expected." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "I want to hide." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "I should have read the syllabus and done a better job." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "Well, nobody's perfect." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

10. You are taking care of your room mates dog while they are on spring break and the dog runs away.

- | | |
|---|--|
| a) You would think, "I am irresponsible and incompetent." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| b) You would think: "My roommate must not take very good care of their dog or it wouldn't have run away." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| c) You would think: "I promise to be more careful next time." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| d) You would think: "My roommate can get a new dog." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |

11. You attend your classmate's housewarming party and you spill red wine on their new cream-colored carpet, but you think no one notices.

- | | |
|---|--|
| a) You would think: "My classmate should have expected some accidents at such a big party." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| b) You would think: "I should stay late to help clean up after the party." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| c) You would think: "I wish I were anywhere but at this party." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| d) You would think: "Why would anyone chose to serve red wine near new light carpet." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |

TOSCA-3
Non-Traditional Student Version
Married-Partner/No Children

Below are situations that people are likely to encounter as a student, followed by several common reactions to those situations.

As you read each scenario, try to imagine yourself in that situation. Then indicate how likely you would be to react in each of the ways described. We ask you to rate all responses because people may feel or react more than one way to the same situation, or they may react different ways at different times.

For example:

A. You wake up early one Saturday morning. It is cold and rainy outside.

a) You would telephone a friend to catch up on news.

1---2---3---4---5
 not likely very likely

b) You would take the extra time to read the paper.

1---2---3---4---5
 not likely very likely

c) You would feel disappointed that it's raining.

1---2---3---4---5
 not likely very likely

d) You would wonder why you woke up so early.

1---2---3---4---5
 not likely very likely

In the above example, I've rated ALL of the answers by circling a number. I circled a "1" for answer (a) because I wouldn't want to wake up a friend very early on a Saturday morning -- so it's not at all likely that I would do that. I circled a "5" for answer (b) because I almost always read the paper if I have time in the morning (very likely). I circled a "3" for answer (c) because for me it's about half and half. Sometimes I would be disappointed about the rain and sometimes I wouldn't -- it would depend on what I had planned. And I circled a "4" for answer (d) because I would probably wonder why I had awakened so early.

Please do not skip any items -- rate all responses.

1. You've made plans to meet your spouse/partner for lunch after meeting with your classmates to discuss a group project. The discussion lasts longer than expected and you realize that you have missed lunch with your loved one.

- a) You would think: "I'm inconsiderate." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "Well, they'll understand." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "I should make it up to them as soon as possible." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "Stupid group project!" 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

2. You borrow a calculator from a fellow classmate and your spouse/partner breaks it. You then try to hide it from your friend.

- a) You would think: "This is making me anxious. I need to either fix it or replace it." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "I should quit school." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "A lot of things aren't made very well these days." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "It was only an accident." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

3. You left the materials you needed for your project in the vehicle that your spouse/partner has at work. Because of this, you have to wait until the last minute to begin a major class project, and it turns out badly.

- a) You would think: "I am incompetent." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "There are never enough hours in the day." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "I deserve to get a bad grade on the project." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "What's done is done." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

4. Your spouse/partner threw a surprise anniversary party for their parents at your home last night and were up late cleaning up afterwards. Because of this, you are so exhausted that you make a mistake at work. You later find out a co-worker got blamed for the error instead of you.

- | | |
|--|--|
| a) You would think: "The company does not like my co-worker." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| b) You would think: "Life is not fair." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| c) You would think: "I should keep quiet and avoid my co-worker." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| d) You would think: "This makes me feel unhappy and I should correct the situation quickly." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |

5. While playing around with your spouse/partner, you throw a ball and it hits them in the face.

- | | |
|---|--|
| a) You would think: "I suck! I can't even throw a ball." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| b) You would think: "My spouse/partner needs to learn how to catch." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| c) You would think: "It was just an accident." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| d) You would think: "I should apologize and make sure my spouse/partner is ok." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |

6. You have agreed to meet your group at a classmate's home to work on the project that is due in 3 days. Your spouse/partner made plans for you to spend the evening with them without checking your schedule and is very upset. The two of you are arguing on the telephone as you are driving down the road and you hit a small animal.

- | | |
|--|--|
| a) You would think: "That animal should not have been on the road." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| b) You would think: "I'm terrible." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| c) You would think: "Well, it was an accident." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| d) You would think: "I feel bad. I should have been more alert while driving down the road." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |

7. You walk out of a mid-term exam thinking you did extremely well despite going out to dinner with your spouse/partner until very late the night before. Then you find out you did poorly.

- a) You would think: "Well, it's just one test." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "The instructor doesn't like me because I have a life and they don't." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "I should have studied harder instead of staying out late." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "I am stupid." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

8. While out with a group of classmates, your spouse/partner repeats a comment you made poking fun at another couple who's not there.

- a) You would think: "It was all in fun; it's harmless." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "I'm a rat." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "They should have been here to defend themselves." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "I should apologize; that couple has a lot of good qualities." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

9. You make a big mistake on an important group project for class. Your group members were depending on you, and your professor criticizes you.

- a) You would think: "The professor should have been more clear about what was expected." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "I want to hide." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "I should have read the syllabus and done a better job." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "Well, nobody's perfect." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

10. Your spouse/partner volunteers you to take care of your classmate's dog while they are on spring break and the dog runs away.

- | | |
|--|--|
| a) You would think, "I am irresponsible and incompetent." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| b) You would think: "My classmate must not take very good care of their dog or it wouldn't have run away." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| c) You would think: "I promise to be more careful next time." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| d) You would think: "My classmate can get a new dog." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |

11. You attend your classmate's housewarming party and your spouse/partner spills red wine on their new cream-colored carpet, but you think no one notices.

- | | |
|---|--|
| a) You would think: "My classmate should have expected some accidents at such a big party." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| b) You would think: "We should stay late to help clean up after the party." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| c) You would think: "I wish we were anywhere but at this party." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| d) You would think: "Why would anyone chose to serve red wine near new light carpet." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |

TOSCA-3
Non-Traditional Student Version
Single Student/With Children

Below are situations that people are likely to encounter as a student, followed by several common reactions to those situations.

As you read each scenario, try to imagine yourself in that situation. Then indicate how likely you would be to react in each of the ways described. We ask you to rate all responses because people may feel or react more than one way to the same situation, or they may react different ways at different times.

For example:

A. You wake up early one Saturday morning. It is cold and rainy outside.

a) You would telephone a friend to catch up on news.

1---2---3---4---5
 not likely very likely

b) You would take the extra time to read the paper.

1---2---3---4---5
 not likely very likely

c) You would feel disappointed that it's raining.

1---2---3---4---5
 not likely very likely

d) You would wonder why you woke up so early.

1---2---3---4---5
 not likely very likely

In the above example, I've rated ALL of the answers by circling a number. I circled a "1" for answer (a) because I wouldn't want to wake up a friend very early on a Saturday morning -- so it's not at all likely that I would do that. I circled a "5" for answer (b) because I almost always read the paper if I have time in the morning (very likely). I circled a "3" for answer (c) because for me it's about half and half. Sometimes I would be disappointed about the rain and sometimes I wouldn't -- it would depend on what I had planned. And I circled a "4" for answer (d) because I would probably wonder why I had awakened so early.

Please do not skip any items -- rate all responses.

1. You've made plans to meet your child for lunch after meeting with your classmates to discuss a group project. The discussion lasts longer than expected and you realize that you have missed lunch with your child.

- a) You would think: "I'm inconsiderate." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "Well, they'll understand." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "I should make it up to them as soon as possible." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "Stupid group project!" 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

2. You borrow a calculator from a fellow classmate and your child breaks it. You then try to hide it from your friend.

- a) You would think: "This is making me anxious. I need to either fix it or replace it." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "I should quit school." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "A lot of things aren't made very well these days." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "It was only an accident." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

3. Your babysitter got stuck at work. Because of this you have to wait until your child goes to bed to begin a major class project, and it turns out badly.

- a) You would think: "I am incompetent." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "There are never enough hours in the day." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "I deserve to get a bad grade on the project." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "What's done is done." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

4. You were up all night with a sick child. Because of this, you are so exhausted that you make a mistake at work. You later find out a co-worker was blamed for the error instead of you.

- | | |
|--|--|
| a) You would think: "The company does not like my co-worker." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| b) You would think: "Life is not fair." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| c) You would think: "I should keep quiet and avoid my co-worker." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| d) You would think: "This makes me feel unhappy and I should correct the situation quickly." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |

5. While playing around with you child, you throw a ball and it hits them in the face.

- | | |
|--|--|
| a) You would think: "I suck! I can't even throw a ball." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| b) You would think: "My child needs to learn how to catch." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| c) You would think: "It was just an accident." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| d) You would think: "I should apologize and make sure my child is ok." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |

6. You have agreed to meet your group at a classmate's home to work on the project that is due in 3 days. You cannot find a sitter so your children had to come along. They are arguing in the back seat, and you glance back to check on them. As you are driving down the road, you hit a small animal.

- | | |
|--|--|
| a) You would think: "That animal should not have been on the road." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| b) You would think: "I'm terrible." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| c) You would think: "Well, it was an accident." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| d) You would think: "I feel bad. I should have been more alert while driving down the road." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |

7. You walk out of a mid-term exam thinking you did extremely well despite being up all night with a sick child. Then you find out you did poorly.

- a) You would think: "Well, it's just one test." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "The instructor doesn't like me because I am a parent." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "I should have studied while I was sitting up with my child." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "I am stupid." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

8. While out with a group of student parents, your child repeats a comment you made poking fun at another student parent who is not there.

- a) You would think: "It was all in fun; it's harmless." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "I'm a rat." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "They should have been here to defend themselves." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "I should apologize; that student parent has a lot of good qualities." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

9. Your child colored on an important group project for class. Your group members were depending on you, and your professor criticizes you.

- a) You would think: "The professor should have been more understanding of the situation." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "I want to hide." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "I should have taken more care to keep my child away from the project." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "Well, nobody's perfect." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

10. You agree to help your child take care of the neighbor's dog while they are on vacation. Your child forgets to close the gate and the dog runs away.

- | | |
|---|--|
| a) You would think, "I am irresponsible and incompetent." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| b) You would think: "My neighbor must not take very good care of their dog or it wouldn't have run away." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| c) You would think: "I promise to be more careful next time." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| d) You would think: "My neighbor can get a new dog." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |

11. You attend your classmate's housewarming party and your child spills red Kool-Aid on their new cream-colored carpet, but you think no one notices.

- | | |
|--|--|
| a) You would think: "My classmate should have expected some accidents at such a big party." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| b) You would think: "We should stay late to help clean up after the party." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| c) You would think: "I wish we were anywhere but at this party." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| d) You would think: "Why would anyone chose to serve children red Kool-Aid near new light colored carpet?" | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |

TOSCA-3
Non-Traditional Student Version
Married-Partner/with Children

Below are situations that people are likely to encounter as a student, followed by several common reactions to those situations.

As you read each scenario, try to imagine yourself in that situation. Then indicate how likely you would be to react in each of the ways described. We ask you to rate all responses because people may feel or react more than one way to the same situation, or they may react different ways at different times.

For example:

A. You wake up early one Saturday morning. It is cold and rainy outside.

a) You would telephone a friend to catch up on news.

1---2---3---4---5
 not likely very likely

b) You would take the extra time to read the paper.

1---2---3---4---5
 not likely very likely

c) You would feel disappointed that it's raining.

1---2---3---4---5
 not likely very likely

d) You would wonder why you woke up so early.

1---2---3---4---5
 not likely very likely

In the above example, I've rated ALL of the answers by circling a number. I circled a "1" for answer (a) because I wouldn't want to wake up a friend very early on a Saturday morning -- so it's not at all likely that I would do that. I circled a "5" for answer (b) because I almost always read the paper if I have time in the morning (very likely). I circled a "3" for answer (c) because for me it's about half and half. Sometimes I would be disappointed about the rain and sometimes I wouldn't -- it would depend on what I had planned. And I circled a "4" for answer (d) because I would probably wonder why I had awakened so early.

Please do not skip any items -- rate all responses.

1. You've made plans to meet your family for lunch after meeting with your classmates to discuss a group project. The discussion lasts longer than expected and you realize that you have missed lunch with your family.

- a) You would think: "I'm inconsiderate." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "Well, they'll understand." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "I should make it up to them as soon as possible." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "Stupid group project!" 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

2. You borrow a calculator from a fellow classmate and it gets broken. You then try to hide it from your friend.

- a) You would think: "This is making me anxious. I need to either fix it or replace it." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "I should quit school." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "A lot of things aren't made very well these days." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "It was only an accident." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

3. Your spouse/partner promised to take the children to the park so you could work on your project but they got stuck at work. Because of this, you have to wait until the last minute to begin a major class project, and it turns out badly.

- a) You would think: "I am incompetent." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "There are never enough hours in the day." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "I deserve to get a bad grade on the project." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "What's done is done." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

4. Your family has been passing around a virus for the past week and you have been taking care of them. You have not gotten much sleep in the past week and you are so exhausted that you make a mistake at work. You later find out a co-worker was blamed for the error instead of you.

- a) You would think: "The company does not like my co-worker." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "Life is not fair." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "I should keep quiet and avoid my co-worker." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "This makes me feel unhappy and I should correct the situation quickly." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

5. While playing softball with your family, you throw a ball and it hits your child in the face.

- a) You would think: "I suck! I can't even throw a ball." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "My child needs to learn how to catch." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "It was just an accident." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "I should apologize and make sure my child is ok." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

6. You have agreed to meet your group at a classmates home to work on the project that is due in 3 days. At the last minute, your spouse/partner gets called into work and you must take the children with you. As you are driving down your classmate's road, they begin to fight. When you glance back at them to stop them, you hit a small animal.

- a) You would think: "That animal should not have been on the road." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "I'm terrible." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "Well, it was an accident." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "I feel bad. I should have been more alert while driving down the road." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

7. You walk out of a mid-term exam thinking you did extremely well despite honoring "Family Movie Night". Then you find out you did poorly.

- a) You would think: "Well, it's just one test." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "The instructor doesn't like me because I have a family." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "I should have studied instead of going to Movie Night." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "I am stupid." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

8. While out with a group of student parents, your spouse/partner repeats a comment you made making fun of another student parent who is not there and your children burst out laughing at it.

- a) You would think: "It was all in fun; it's harmless." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "I'm a rat." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "They should have been here to defend themselves." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "I should apologize; that student parent has a lot of good qualities." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

9. Your spouse/partner lets your child color on an important group project for class. Your group members were depending on you, and your professor criticizes you.

- a) You would think: "The professor should have been more understanding about the situation." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "I want to hide." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "I should have made sure to keep the project out of reach." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "Well, nobody's perfect." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

10. Your spouse/partner volunteers you to take care of your neighbor's dog while they are on vacation. Your children go into the yard to play with the dog; forget to close the gate and the dog runs away.

- | | |
|---|--|
| a) You would think, "I am irresponsible and incompetent." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| b) You would think: "My neighbor must not take very good care of their dog or it wouldn't have run away." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| c) You would think: "I promise to be more careful next time." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| d) You would think: "My neighbor can get a new dog." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |

11. You and your family attend your classmate's housewarming party and your child spills red Kool-Aid on their new cream-colored carpet, but you think no one notices.

- | | |
|---|--|
| a) You would think: "My classmate should have expected some accidents at such a big party." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| b) You would think: "We should stay late to help clean up after the party." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| c) You would think: "I wish we were anywhere but at this party." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| d) You would think: "Why would anyone chose to serve red Kool-Aid near new light carpet." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |

Section 3

TOSCA-3 Short Version

Below are situations that people are likely to encounter in day-to-day life, followed by several common reactions to those situations.

As you read each scenario, try to imagine yourself in that situation. Then indicate how likely you would be to react in each of the ways described. We ask you to rate all responses because people may feel or react more than one way to the same situation, or they may react different ways at different times.

For example:

A. You wake up early one Saturday morning. It is cold and rainy outside.

a) You would telephone a friend to catch up on news.

1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

b) You would take the extra time to read the paper.

1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

c) You would feel disappointed that it's raining.

1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

d) You would wonder why you woke up so early.

1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

In the above example, I've rated ALL of the answers by circling a number. I circled a "1" for answer (a) because I wouldn't want to wake up a friend very early on a Saturday morning -- so it's not at all likely that I would do that. I circled a "5" for answer (b) because I almost always read the paper if I have time in the morning (very likely). I circled a "3" for answer (c) because for me it's about half and half. Sometimes I would be disappointed about the rain and sometimes I wouldn't -- it would depend on what I had planned. And I circled a "4" for answer (d) because I would probably wonder why I had awakened so early.

Please do not skip any items -- rate all responses.

1. You make plans to meet a friend for lunch. At 5 o'clock, you realize you stood him up.

- a) You would think: "I'm inconsiderate." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "Well, they'll understand." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You'd think you should make it up to him as soon as possible. 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "My boss distracted me just before lunch." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

2. You break something at work and then hide it.

- a) You would think: "This is making me anxious. I need to either fix it or get someone else to." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think about quitting. 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "A lot of things aren't made very well these days." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "It was only an accident." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

3. At work, you wait until the last minute to plan a project, and it turns out badly.

- a) You would feel incompetent. 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "There are never enough hours in the day." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would feel: "I deserve to be reprimanded for mismanaging the project." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "What's done is done." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

4. You make a mistake at work and find out a co-worker is blamed for the error.

- | | |
|---|--|
| a) You would think the company did not like the co-worker. | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| b) You would think: "Life is not fair." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| c) You would keep quiet and avoid the co-worker. | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| d) You would feel unhappy and eager to correct the situation. | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |

5. While playing around, you throw a ball and it hits your friend in the face.

- | | |
|---|--|
| a) You would feel inadequate that you can't even throw a ball. | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| b) You would think maybe your friend needs more practice at catching. | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| c) You would think: "It was just an accident." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| d) You would apologize and make sure your friend feels better. | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |

6. You are driving down the road, and you hit a small animal.

- | | |
|---|--|
| a) You would think the animal shouldn't have been on the road. | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| b) You would think: "I'm terrible." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| c) You would feel: "Well, it was an accident." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| d) You'd feel bad you hadn't been more alert driving down the road. | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |

7. You walk out of an exam thinking you did extremely well. Then you find out you did poorly.

- a) You would think: "Well, it's just a test." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "The instructor doesn't like me." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "I should have studied harder." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would feel stupid. 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

8. While out with a group of friends, you make fun of a friend who's not there.

- a) You would think: "It was all in fun; it's harmless." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would feel small...like a rat. 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think that perhaps that friend should have been there to defend himself/herself. 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would apologize and talk about that person's good points. 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

9. You make a big mistake on an important project at work. People were depending on you, and your boss criticizes you.

- a) You would think your boss should have been more clear about what was expected of you. 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- b) You would feel like you wanted to hide. 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "I should have recognized the problem and done a better job." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "Well, nobody's perfect." 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely

10. You are taking care of your friend's dog while they are on vacation and the dog runs away.

- | | |
|--|--|
| a) You would think, "I am irresponsible and incompetent." | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| b) You would think your friend must not take very good care of their dog or it wouldn't have run away. | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| c) You would vow to be more careful next time. | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| d) You would think your friend could just get a new dog. | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |

11. You attend your co-worker's housewarming party and you spill red wine on their new cream-colored carpet, but you think no one notices.

- | | |
|---|--|
| a) You think your co-worker should have expected some accidents at such a big party. | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| b) You would stay late to help clean up the stain after the party. | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| c) You would wish you were anywhere but at the party. | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |
| d) You would wonder why your co-worker chose to serve red wine with the new light carpet. | 1---2---3---4---5
not likely very likely |

APPENDIX D

June P Tangney <jtangney@gmu.edu>

Mon, Apr 25, 2011 at 8:43 AM

To: kalton@siu.edu

Hello Kristian,

You are more than welcome to use our measures. I am attaching the TOSCA-3 (our most recent measure of shame and guilt proneness for adults) along with scoring information. The SCAAI was really the precursor to the TOSCA, so I would recommend that you use the TOSCA. You can also find information on the reliability and validity of the TOSCA-3, and a summary of our research in:

Tangney, JP & Dearing, RL (2002). Shame and Guilt. NY: Guilford Press.

The book is available through www.guilford.com, www.amazon.com, and in some university libraries.

Please do keep in touch and let us know how your research develops. I would be grateful for a summary of the results whenever they become available.

Best Wishes,

June T.

From: Kristian Alton [mailto:kalton@siu.edu]
Sent: Friday, April 08, 2011 3:34 PM
To: jtangney@gmu.edu
Subject: Guilt assessment instrument

Good day Dr. Tangney,

While doing research with non-traditional students, I have heard several students speak of the guilt they feel related to the demands on their time that prevent them from interacting with their children and partners as often as they would like or related to their delay of education. Such comments have peaked my interest. I am curious to know if this reported guilt is a common experience for all non-traditional students or if it is limited to student parents. Exploring feelings of guilt as a non-traditional student is the focus of my thesis.

I am currently seeking a reliable and valid measure to use in my research. From what I have been reading, The Self-Conscious Affect and Attribution Inventory or the Test of Self-Conscious Affect may be what I need. I would like to request more information from you regarding the two instruments. I have found several articles that speak to the validity and reliability of the instruments, but have not been able to see the items on them. Can you please send me a sample of the items on instruments, current psychometric data on them, or any suggestions for a more appropriate instrument to use with this population. At this time, I am simply trying to identify the best instrument to use for my study.

Should it be determined that one of these instruments would be the best fit, I will send a formal letter requesting your permission to use it. Any information or suggestions would be greatly appreciated.

Kristian Alton
Graduate Assistant
Non-Traditional Student Services
Student Development
Student Center, Room 305-Mail Code 4425
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
1255 Lincoln Drive
Carbondale< Illinois 62901
618-453-5741
www.stddev.siu.edu
kalton@sdev.siu.edu

2 attachments



TOSCA-3.doc
48K



TOSCA-3score.doc
28K

Kristian Alton <kalton@siu.edu>

Mon, May 9, 2011 at 2:25 PM

To: June P Tangney <jtangney@gmu.edu>

Dr. Tangney,

In order to determine if guilt and shame is related to being a non-traditional student, I need to ask questions related to typical situations non-traditional students experience some of which are very similar to the scenarios used in the TOSCA-III. Would you be open to modification of the TOSCA-III to fit the student based scenarios (with proper credit to you and your co-creators of course)?

For example, many students I have spoken too have mentioned missing lunch dates with spouses, family members, or friends because of having to meet with team members for a group project. A modified version of the first question on the TOSCA-III would look like:

You've made plans to meet a friend for lunch after your meeting your classmates to discuss a group project. The discussion lasts longer than expected and you realize you have missed lunch with your friend.

- a) You would think; " I'm inconsiderate."
- b) You would think: "Well, they'll understand."
- c) You would think: "I should make it up to them as soon as possible."

d) You would think: "Stupid group project!"

I would be happy to send you my suggested alterations to the wording for approval. There will actually be four versions, (single/no children, married/without children, single with children, and married with children) modified slightly to accommodate the type of non-traditional student taking it. Each participant will also be given the TOSCA-III (short version) to determine the overall proneness to guilt and shame. I would imagine that those who score high on the TOSCA-III would be more likely to experience guilt and shame in specific situations like being a non-traditional student.

I understand if you would rather not have any modifications done to the wording. Please let me know your thoughts so I may proceed accordingly.

[Quoted text hidden]

June Tangney <jtangney@gmu.edu>

Mon, May 9, 2011 at 2:35 PM

To: Kristian Alton <kalton@siu.edu>

Hi Kristian,

That sounds like an excellent plan. I'd be happy to look over the modified items when you have them.

Best wishes,

June T.

From: Kristian Alton [mailto:kalton@siu.edu]

Sent: Monday, May 09, 2011 3:25 PM

To: June P Tangney

Subject: Re: Guilt assessment instrument

[Quoted text hidden]

Kristian Alton <kalton@siu.edu>

Mon, May 9, 2011 at 3:01 PM

To: June Tangney <jtangney@gmu.edu>

Thank you so much!

[Quoted text hidden]

VITA
Graduate School
Southern Illinois University

Kristian L. Alton

kristian.alton@yahoo.com

Oklahoma State University
Bachelor of Arts, Psychology, December 2005

Oklahoma State University
Bachelor of Science, Human Development and Family Sciences, December 2007

Thesis Title:
Exploring the Guilt-Proneness of Non-Traditional Students

Major Professor: Muthoni Kimemia